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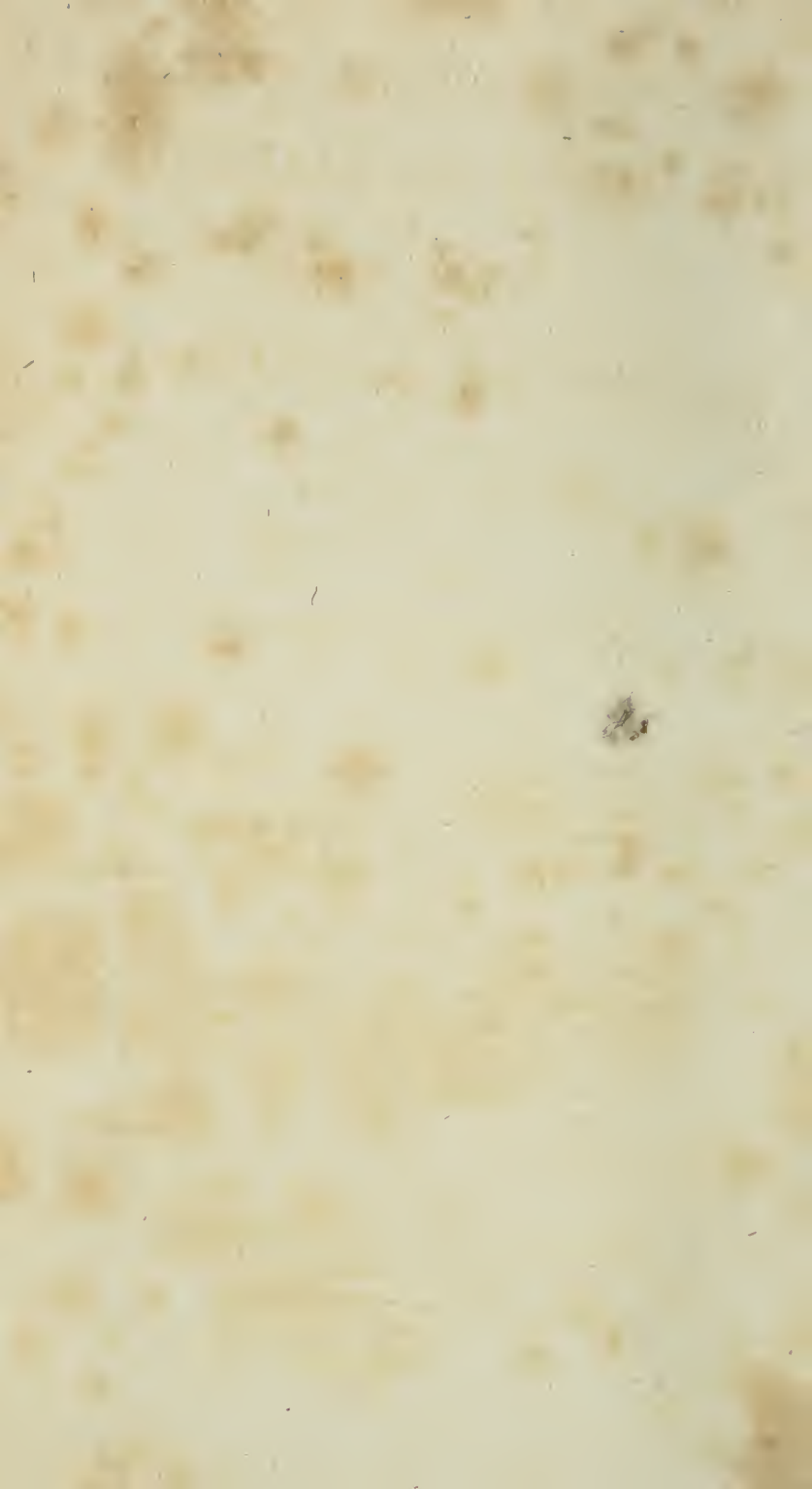
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THEODOSIUS DE ZULVIN,
THE MONK OF MADRID:

A SPANISH TALE,

DELINEATING
VARIOUS TRAITS OF THE HUMAN MIND.

BY
GEORGE MOORE,
AUTHOR OF GRASVILLE ABBEY.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

O ever righteous Heaven ! canst thou suffer
This sacrilegious hypocrite, this spoiler,
To steal thy terrors and blaspheme thy name,
Nor doom him instant dead ?

MILLER'S *Tragedy of MAHOMET*.

Extremes in Nature equal ends produce ;
In Man they join to some mysterious use.
Though each by turns the other's bounds invade,
As in some well-wrought picture light and shade ;
And oft so mix, the difference is too nice
Where ends the virtue or begins the vice.

POPE.

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THE

MONK OF MADRID,

A SPANISH TALE.



CHAP. XVIII.

Tell me what means this mystery and gloom
That low'rs around?

THOMSON.

ORLANDO had not yet resolved to what part he should go, and he found himself some little distance from the city before the thought entered his mind.

The morning was delightfully calm and serene. The sun was already a considerable height above the horizon, while its warm and cheering rays seemed to enliven and animate all nature. It was one of those periods

which appear to inspire a universal harmony throughout the creation. Orlando felt these effects, yet he was unable to enjoy them. He knew there were pleasures the most sublime to be drawn from them, but he was excluded from a participation of the felicity they held forth. He could admire the beauty of the scenery which surrounded him; but when he considered his own figure as one among the groupe, a monitor he was unable to silence continually reminded him of his unworthiness.

“He who created me,” he exclaimed, “must surely take delight in the happiness of his creatures; for on such a morning as this he seems to smile upon all as a common family, in which his affections are equally divided. Surely, then, if one so omnipotent and supreme thus vouchsafes to take a part in the comforts of those whom his power has brought into existence, it must indeed be temerity in them to attempt to prey upon each other.”

Orlando felt the full force of these arguments; but, far from cherishing them as the likely means of bringing about a reforma-

tion in his own conduct, he flew from them as a dangerous relaxation of the mind, which tended to unnerve him from that pitch of daring villany he now began to consider was a worthy object of emulation.

He continued to ride forward at a considerable pace, when he overtook a humble funeral slowly proceeding on the road he was travelling. Orlando more particularly noticed it, by observing that there were two coffins, and only four mourners, who appeared little affected by the solemnity of the ceremony in which they were engaged ; while a bystander, that watched the procession, shed many tears as it passed him. His curiosity led him to inquire of this man who were the persons being conveyed to the grave. The appearance of the stranger was decent and respectable ; but no traces above a common situation in life were to be found either in his manner or dress.

“ Signior,” said he in answer to Orlando’s question, “ it is a poor unfortunate tradesman and his wife : the former, in an act of desperation, occasioned by family misfortunes, destroyed himself in the prison where

he was confined for debt ; and the latter, who lost her senses, found means the next day, through the neglect of the people to whom she was intrusted, to follow the dreadful example of her unfortunate husband."

Orlando trembled ; his soul foreboded it was Barnarvo and his wife who were meant. " Their name ? " he exclaimed with some precipitation.

" Barnarvo the jeweller," answered the man.—Orlando found himself unable to move, while the following words of the stranger seemed to chill his very heart.

" Alas ! signior," continued he, " perhaps you see me shed these tears with astonishment ; but I knew the unfortunate deceased in their lifetime. I knew them possessed of a daughter, in whom every quality, every feminine softness, which does honour to the female name was combined ; till a villanous seducer, a coward wretch, took the advantage of her father's confinement, and in destroying her honour murdered her parents." Orlando uttered an exclamation ; which the other mistaking for

the effect of severe distress at his tale, proceeded—

“ Ah ! signior, this unfortunate young creature, covered with shame and horror, immediately visited her parents in the prison. You appear to have a feeling heart, and may conceive their anguish, their misery, in short their distraction. Every effort was used to draw from her the name of her seducer ; she however refused to reveal it, but on condition that they neither of them should ever disclose it. They were necessitated at last to make the most solemn assurance of acquiescence to this demand, and were informed of the wretch who had overwhelmed them with disgrace and infamy in the ruin of a beloved child. Laura, (for that was the name of the poor girl,) alarmed at the dreadful state into which her information had thrown her parents, hurried from the prison in a state little short of madness, and has not since been heard of. As Barnarvo died insolvent, his funeral expenses are defrayed by public charity, and the men whom you see as mourners are the servants of those persons,

who merely attend to make up the procession. Otto, who perceived his master was unable to answer, ventured to relieve him by asking the stranger why he was not one of them, as he appeared to be so warm a friend to the deceased. "Alas!" said he, "I have a large family, and was unable to subscribe towards the burial; therefore I had no invitation to partake of its ceremonies."

"Your tale is indeed an unfortunate one," said Orlando, striving to conceal his emotions. "Has this seducer, then, of whom you speak, never been discovered?"

"Oh! never," cried the man: "the solemn promise made to their daughter on that subject was rigidly maintained both by father and mother. They suffered the name of the villain to die with them. May curses fall upon his head!" exclaimed the indignant stranger, while Orlando shrunk from his angry eye with a guilty consciousness that those curses were called down upon him. "May he live to experience the pangs which a father feels at the loss of a beloved daughter's honour! May he groan under those afflictions which he has caused

in others ! May he, in the last hour of dissolution, reflect with agony on the misery he entailed on her who loved him ! and may he feel the want of that comfort and consolation from which he has excluded her for ever !”

“ You are severe, old man,” said Orlando, “ in behalf of the misfortunes of your friend.” “ I am a father,” answered the stranger. “ By the reproach, signior, I presume you are none.” They parted: Orlando covered with inward shame, and the stranger deeply affected with the relation he had given.

This incident again roused the feelings of the former. The curses of the man in behalf of injured innocence had sunk deeply on his heart. The figure of the once happy and lovely Laura floated before his eyes, and the idea of her miserable situation (of which he had been the cause) at once occasioned him the most severe pangs of remorse. But such feelings were of short duration : he smothered them under a dread of the consequences : he feared a retrospective view of his conduct, for retrospection presented his own character under the glaring deformity

of vice : he flew from the picture with horror, but his disgust produced no reformation.

“ Was I not an outcast in society,” he whispered to himself, “ when I practised those virtues on which the world lavish their most fulsome praise ? Was I not taught by my uncle to believe that the reward of the close and languid confinement I suffered would be an elevated rank in the opinion of my fellow creatures ? that a perfect character like mine would demand their respect and admiration ? that my example would become a model for their attainment, and my name a standard for their encomiums ? How was I deceived ! Flushed with a portrait so warm and animating to a young bosom, I rushed on the world in perfect security of success. What was my disappointment, what were my feelings occasioned by wounded pride, when they received me as a being worthy only of their contempt ! when I discovered to my mortification, that those whom I had been led to consider as insects below my notice, rose far my superior ! that they even scoffed at me ! that I became a subject for their ridicule, a mere bauble for their enter-

tainment! that some derided me, others pitied me, and the whole laughed at me! I experienced every hour the degradation under which I laboured. I felt the conviction of my inferiority with distraction: I perceived myself unable to overcome that diffidence which I had acquired by a seclusion from the world, and my imbecility on this point produced stronger barriers against the chance of every other attainment. Oh! God! God! what have been the consequences of this mode of education? It has damned me for ever. I could not brook derision from those who I expected were to worship me: they commenced hostilities, and I, by the common law of nature, have retaliated. Are these then the crimes for which I so highly condemn myself? Fool that I am thus to cavil with my own interest, under the squeamish scruples which formed a part of that tuition I have reason so greatly to rue!"

Such was the train of reflexions with which Orlando travelled forward, while his conclusions were always drawn to palliate his own conduct. There were yet some

arrangements, with respect to the plan he had so precipitately pursued of leaving the castle, which he had not settled upon, and which also occupied a part of his journey. It was necessary Don Diego should receive the intelligence of his departure from himself, to prevent any suspicions of the causes that had occasioned it: the same plea might serve for him which he had made to the marquis, namely, his engagement to visit a friend; but it was requisite, for the sake of appearance as well as for the receipt of his quarterly remittance, that his uncle should have a direction where to write to him: this was a more difficult task than he was at first aware of, as he had yet fixed on no part for his destination. With respect to the money, he considered he could request him to pay it as usual into the hands of a banker at Madrid, from whom he might by various means contrive to procure it; but he was perfectly convinced of the alarm Don Diego would feel at the idea of his so suddenly quitting the city alone, without giving any particular account of the place to which

he was gone. At length he determined to write a short letter to Andalusia, wherein he could slightly mention his leaving the castle of Olvernardo for a few days on an excursion with a friend, without saying who, or to what part; as the insignificance of the event, related in that way, would be an excuse for his not detailing the particulars, and yet answer the purpose, in making him the first informed of the affair.

Towards the close of the evening they halted at a respectable-looking inn on the road-side, and Orlando determined to remain there for the night. The landlord, a brisk good-looking man, received him at the gates, and assisted him to dismount with great courtesy. He then conducted him to a room in which were placed two persons apparently regaling themselves after the fatigues of their several occupations. The one was a tall lean man about fifty years of age, his eyes sunk, and his cheek-bones remarkably high; he had a long nose, and large mouth, with a very melancholy contour of countenance: he was shabbily dressed, yet he occupied the principal

place in the apartment, and seemed to possess a consequence far superior to his appearance.

The other was a short plump man, who looked somewhat younger; his rosy gills and swelling corporation foretold he possessed all the good things of this world, and enjoyed them: he had one of those faces in which is seen more good-nature than sagacity; and while he listened with a sort of vacant stare to his companion, (whose strains were not the most cheerful,) he answered every remark by an inward ejaculation, which expressed his consent to any assertion he chose to make. Orlando had not been seated above five minutes, before another person entered the apartment, whose figure and manners were more remarkable than the rest of the company. He was clad in a strange habit, and seemed in the decline of life; his person appeared to have been formerly handsome, but was now wasted and decayed; his grey locks covered a pallid yet interesting countenance; he took little notice of the persons assembled, and seated himself

in a solitary part of the room. Orlando soon discovered the lean visitor was a misanthrope: he railed against the whole world with peculiar bitterness, and generally addressed himself to his jolly companion, who did not seem inclined to take the trouble to contradict him. "Now you perceive," said he, "nothing can be more plain than that mankind are naturally vicious. Have we not infants who commit thefts without any other motive but mere wantonness? Does not every man prey upon his brother? In short, are we not all damned rogues?"

"Ah!" returned the lusty gentleman, "what you say is very true. My service to you, signior." "Oh! it is a diabolical world," continued the other, who under great displeasure watched his rosy-faced auditor finish his glass of liquor to the very dregs with considerable comfort: "I say it is a diabolical world. Why, even what you are now drinking with such *goût* is produced for you by the misery of your fellow creatures; they languish under the most dreadful torments, while you are gratifying your uncon-

scionable appetite with the very commodity they have watered with their tears." This last sentence seemed to have a more sensible effect upon the lusty gentleman than any part of the preceding discourse: he was palating the remains of the sugar that had dropped into his mouth with a large piece of lemon, which was all that was left of his quantum, and which he seemed determined not to lose, by the very careful manner in which he turned up the glass to receive them. Being however of a delicate stomach, he began to make wry faces at the idea of his beverage having been in part composed of so briny a commodity as human tears, yet declared he never recollected to have tasted such a twang in the numberless glasses of mixed liquor he had enjoyed during the course of his life.

The lean Spaniard now turned his eyes on his companion with more than usual contempt, and drinking in his turn exclaimed, "Here is to you, signior, and God help you!" The other, mistaking this epithet for the very height of civility, was profuse in his thanks for the goodness of his

wishes, and declared he must have another glass to return the compliment.

“ Why, to say the truth,” cried he, stretching himself in his chair, “ I likes to make myself comfortable. I have gained a little independence, signior, by my industry, and I enjoys it. As for the world, you see, I don’t care a fig for it ; and, egad ! for a very good reason, because the world don’t care half a one for me. I never frets and stews myself how things goes, not I ; and when they tell me the news concerning the affairs of the heads of the nation, why, I drink success to those who are honest.”

“ Honest !” repeated the misanthrope with great emphasis, “ honest !—But I beg pardon, signior, I won’t interrupt you in talking about it.”—“ Oh ! don’t mention it,” answered his lusty companion, whose glass was by this time replenished, “ I could not have left off in a better place.”

“ Take my word for it, signior,” said the other, “ honesty is a mere phantom. Where are you to find it ? Answer me that, signior. Are we not villains to ourselves ? Have we

a single virtue belonging to us? No: we are lost past redemption."

The lusty one answered, that he was very sorry for it, and then declared he had not tasted a nicer drop of rum and water for many a day.

Orlando, truly sick of this discourse, walked towards the visitor at the remote part of the room, and attempted to open a conversation by observing it was a charming evening.

He answered in the affirmative.

"I experience an unusual delight," continued Orlando, "on such a night as this." The half suppressed sigh which followed this observation told it was false; but the stranger's sigh was not relieved by such an effort.

He fixed his eyes upon Orlando with peculiar earnestness, and he attempted to conceal a tear which rushed from his eye. "I beg pardon, signior," he exclaimed, apparently recollecting himself, "your observation was just: it is a delightful evening, and to the happy must indeed occasion

sensations the most pleasing." "I have oft-times been tempted to suppose," continued Orlando, "that even the unhappy receive an alleviation to their sufferings from the reflexions that are naturally produced by such a night."

"If that alleviation may be traced," answered the stranger, "in an excess of soft and sorrowful remembrances, the child of misfortune, it is true, can find a luxury in them; his wounded soul can raise in such tranquil moments shadows of imagination, the originals of which possessed his most strong and fervent affections: but while he gazes in rapture on the outline his poor afflicted mind has delineated, a recollection the most poignant obliterates the form with his tears: perhaps that beloved countenance which momentary delirium presented to him is now mouldered in the grave; those features which were indelibly engraven on his heart have long since crumbled into dust. Oh, God! what are his feelings when he reflects upon the virtues of the deceased, and of the ties which bound them to each other! He seems to have lost a part of himself, and looks towards death

with anxious solicitation, as the only friend who can re-unite them."

The stranger was almost stifled with emotions as he uttered the last words, and Orlando felt himself uncommonly moved by his distress. The lean and lusty gentleman attended to this discourse with great attention; the eyes of the former were riveted on the speaker; while the latter so far exerted himself as to push his wig from over his left ear, and incline his head in a position that he might lose nothing of what was said; in which situation he remained for a considerable time after the other left off speaking, who soon quitted the apartment. The lusty man then replaced his wig and head in the same posture from which he had moved them, and declared that he believed what the stranger had said to be very true, though he did not rightly understand it. His companion fixed his eyes upon him with a significant stare, and, shrugging up his shoulders, exclaimed with considerable contempt—

"You are a good-natured man at all exents, signior!"

His lusty companion still mistook his irony for compliments; was again profuse in his thanks, and continued to sip his liquor with great satisfaction.

The landlord now entered the room, and Orlando made some inquiry after his guest who had just left them. The man said he had arrived but a few hours, that he appeared of a very melancholy turn of mind, and was, he supposed, gone to take a ramble towards the Hermitage, a place, indeed, well suited to encourage his malady. Having asked which way would lead him to this place, and procured a direction, Orlando determined to walk there himself, glad of an opportunity to escape from the company in which the stranger had left him. There was something in this man which excited in him more than ordinary curiosity and regard. He felt an interest in his apparent sorrows, unusual at so short an acquaintance, and he wished much for another interview to confirm his good will. It was in part these feelings which urged him to follow to the Hermitage; and after wishing the lean and lusty visitors a good evening,

he proceeded immediately on his excursion.

The ruins were a little distance from the house, through a copse, in which a road had been cut by the landlord. It opened rather suddenly to an extensive space of broken ground, the under parts of which were composed of a red sandy soil, and the upper crusted with a fine green sod covered with brush-wood and wild shrubs. The boundary on each side was formed by mountains of considerable height, which were adorned with fine pastures. The centre opened to the distant prospect of a beautiful country, while in an angle of the perspective might just be observed the clustered buildings of the city of Toledo. A heavy fall of water rolled in torrents from a dark craggy eminence that joined the left mountain, and fell with an awful noise into a large brook below, which wound to the right, and partly surrounded the ruins of an ancient building, which had been converted by modern hands into the fancied dwelling of a hermit. A wooden bridge of simple construction conveyed him to the entrance of this solitary

retreat, which, covered by moss, and encompassed with thick foliage, inspired the beholder with the most melancholy sensations. Orlando passed through the wicket door, and found the internal part rudely divided into two apartments: an opening of similar shape and size to the front took him to the back of the building, in which was a lonely walk that ran through a double range of cypress trees: in one part of it, upon the fragment of a stone tablet, he read the following inscription.

LINES TO MELANCHOLY*.

Come, pensive power,
 With thy rapt gaze and mystic vision come,
 And consecrate the shade! To thee belong
 The dark brown horrors! Melancholy, thine
 The sainted relic, thine the mould'ring bone
 And hermit seat! Come with the pale-eyed moon,
 That leads the yellow-skirted ev'ning forth
 To steep the vales in dew; when the dull bat
 Wheels her short flight athwart the dusky bent,
 Whose matted beard sheds slow the trickling drop,
 Meas'ring the ring-dove's dirge! Come with a train
 Of soft remembrances that melt the heart
 In love to human kind; of solemn thoughts
 That lift the soul to heaven!

* Author unknown.—See Preface.

On a stone of similar form, at some little distance, he observed a second inscription. The unaffected and simple beauties in the former one urged him to examine this with similar attention, and he read the following lines with equal gratification.

* Thou who hast trac'd the windings of the dell,
If haply here thy wilder'd steps are led,
Read what the Genius of the rural scene,
As once upon my raptur'd ear he pour'd
The wildest notes upon his oaten reed,
Spoke when he closed the song ——

—————“ Not these alone,
The woodbine bower, or bank with vi'lets drest;
Not the first smile of meek-eyed morn, that wakes
The carol of the groves; the water's fall;
The murmurs wasting on the gentle gales,
That breathe on ev'ning's bosom; not the gleam
Of setting sun, that gilds the tufted shade;
Nor all the gilded charms of beauty else,
That nature's lavish hand hath spread around;
Not these alone delight, save when the soul
Congenial meets them.—Artless, pensive power!
Who foll'wing nature in her peaceful walks,
Unenvy'd hears the din of life arise,
Toils of the great, and follies of the gay;
And, wrapp'd in calm Contentment's russet robe,
Pities the pageant bliss of half mankind!”

As the evening closed, the gloomy ap-

* By Mr. Mackenzie.—See Preface.

pearance of the place considerably increased: he returned again to the front, but he could not discover the stranger he sought.

The thick veil of night was spreading over the distant part of the view; the background of the scenery was already obscured by misty vapours. This temporary darkness, however, was of short duration. A full moon rose slowly with majestic grandeur above the horizon, and appeared to dispel the gathering clouds, through which it shone with peculiar lustre. Every object seemed fresh tinted by the rays of the resplendent orb, and the whole view appeared suddenly to change by omnipotent power.

Orlando, as he leaned over the railing of the bridge, was for a few moments entranced with the sight. His quivering lips were inclined to utter a repentant prayer to that Being whose power he at this moment experienced with a conviction that struck his soul with awe. But the figure of the murdered Barnarvo, with those of his distracted wife and unfortunate daughter, floated before his eyes. The idea of the direful state into which he had fallen, from that emi-

nence of virtue he had formerly so proudly valued, rushed upon his mind. A thousand remembrances of the early state of childhood, when he had received the commendations of his uncle for any little trait of magnanimity, or self-denial of boyish sport not altogether consistent with the strictest tenets of morality, rapidly succeeded each other, and produced a train of reflexions the most poignant to his feelings. He burst into tears. Orlando was for a moment virtuous. He lifted up his trembling hands in a supplicating posture towards heaven ; he uttered a pious ejaculation, and, wrapt in a religious fervency, was in the act of throwing himself on his knees, when the moon, escaping from a cloud which had for a moment obscured it, shone its refulgent beams on the part where he stood : suddenly turning his head at the instantaneous blaze of light which it occasioned, he beheld, with an exclamation of terror, but a few paces from him, the pale and ghastly figure of Theodosius the monk. His long black garments swelled with every breeze ; his death-like countenance was fixed upon Orlando with

the most terrific expressions of anger; and he approached him with a slow and solemn step.

“In the name of the Holy Virgin,” exclaimed Orlando, as he shrunk back at his advance, “why do you thus pursue me? Why is your vengeance insatiable on a wretch who has unfortunately fallen under your power, and should therefore have some claim to your humanity? If you actually possess attributes superior to your fellow-creatures, which at times your actions seem to indicate, why thus exert them on one who is unequal to aid himself in a necessary defence, and who can only escape from your tyranny by obstinate and determined disobedience?”

“Perjured fool!” returned the monk with a contemptuous smile, “you would pray to your God, and in a whimpering rhapsody confess you are a villain. But you deceive yourself: you dare own to him what you are ashamed to confess to the world. Coward like, you are sensible of the punishment you deserve, but you have not the courage to receive it. If such are your puny tenets, prostrate yourself before this God, and solicit

him to screen you from the public infamy which would follow a discovery of your crimes in Madrid : pray to him to shield you from the arm of justice, which would drag you to a common scaffold, and exhibit you before the eyes of the world suffering an ignominious punishment for the misdemeanours of a common criminal.”

“Oh, Heaven!” exclaimed Orlando, shuddering at this picture of disgrace, “cursed be the hour in which I exposed myself to the power of such horrible anticipations !”

“Have you not,” answered Theodosius, “marred those schemes I had projected, under a pusillanimity that would have disgraced a child? Had you not the most perfect opportunity to have rendered me essential aid, by a gratification to your own desires the most lascivious and voluptuous?”

“You know not what I witnessed in those moments,” interrupted Orlando : “yourself would have been appalled in like circumstances.”

“Pale-hearted boy,” answered the monk, “whatever might have been the appearance which disturbed you, its power was impo-

tent. Mark me!" he cried, while he seized the trembling arm of Orlando with violence. "I do not so easily mean to resign my power over you. Cassandra's virtue is preserved;—but" (he lowered his voice almost to a whisper) "you have another task. There is one who must be wrapped in everlasting sleep before to-morrow."—(Orlando shuddered at the sentence.)—"This is a fit place for counsel on such a deed of darkness. You have seen a traveller in a foreign dress, who has lately arrived at this inn. He is the victim to whom I allude, and it is to you I look for the completion of my project. This man, strange as it may appear to you, through circumstances the most mysterious and intricate, is a very serpent in my way. While he exists I breathe but faintly the breath of life. Till his eyes are closed in death, mine open languidly to the light of day. Again I say he must die this very night;—*you* must destroy him."

"Never!" exclaimed Orlando with an elevated voice, while he disengaged himself from the grasp of the priest, "never!—Theodosius de Zülvin," he cried in a firm tone,

“you have, it is true, an ascendancy over me the most powerful; but, whatever may have been my crimes, these hands are not yet imbrued in the blood of a fellow-creature. From such stain will I preserve them, although thy oppression should crush me.”

“Hypocrite!” answered the monk, “consider but for a moment how you flatter your own conscience. Trace those secret springs in the mind of your deceased friend Barnarvo, which urged him to become his own assassin, and then exclaim, if you can, ‘*I am no murderer.*’ Are you the less innocent, as the destroyer of his existence, because you did not openly give the fatal blow which cast him into eternity? Can you account yourself less culpable as the author of the unfortunate catastrophe which closed his life, because your crime has never yet been publicly discovered? Reflect on the poignancy of his feelings, when he discovered you to be the cause of his blighted honour! when he beheld a beloved child lost for ever, and disgraced by your perfidy! and saw himself the dupe of pretended friend-

ship and artful insinuations! Unable to sustain such feelings, he annihilated his own being, but left the heavy charge of his blood on the head of him whose villany made life hateful to him. The miseries which the wretched Laura is doomed to encounter, as well as the dissolution of her distracted mother, may be traced from the same source.—Can *he* then be termed innocent, against whom such charges may be brought?"

"In mercy spare me!" exclaimed Orlando; "your words are torture to my soul."

"Why then," replied the monk, "remain the puny votary of virtues you was not born to practise? Why pretend to deceive me with the farcical semblance of morality, when you have trampled on the very essence of its laws? In Barnarvo you destroyed your friend—a man whom you had taught to consider you as his benefactor: towards this stranger you can have no such ties; he is the casual acquaintance of a moment; you have not known him long enough to take any peculiar interest in his welfare, or

conceive any anxiety for his future fate.— This powder is a poison of the most effectual kind. You must contrive to mix it with his drink, and he will not long survive the first draught. The effects will obviate any suspicions of the cause of his death: no appearance will be produced to raise conjectures on that subject.”

Orlando still hesitated.

“ On any other point,” he cried, “ I would not attempt to cavil at an acquiescence to your wishes; but on *this* I have not resolution to determine.”

“ Wretch!” exclaimed the monk with greater violence than he had ever yet seen him exert, “ receive then the reward of your pusillanimity: from this hour shall your name be branded with the most public infamy: every province shall resound with the description of your hypocrisy and crimes: the inhabitants of every city shall call down curses on your head, and elevate you as a warning beacon of blasted fame. Your actions, and the secret springs from which they arose, shall be so detailed, that the vicious connexion may be conceived by

children, while their lisping tongues shall utter execrations on you."

Orlando was sensible of his power to execute in part this dreadful threat. An attempt to rob the marquis d'Olvernardo (from whom he had received such marked favours) would be considered by all as an unpardonable act of depravity, and stigmatize his character for ever. Nor would the ruin of Laura, when classed with the tragical events which followed as the consequences of it, fail to produce a most decided and general detestation of his conduct.

Theodosius had too well studied his character to be ignorant that these threats were at present the strongest hold he had upon him; and by the changes of his countenance he entertained the most sanguine hopes of their success.

"Oh God!" he exclaimed in agony, "am I thus doomed to become the deliberate murderer? to annihilate the life of man, even without motive or interest?" Again he paused. Would the crimination of the priest, detested as he was by the multitude, be esteemed as valid against so fair a cha-

racter as his? This doubt had before arisen in his mind; but he remembered the notes which he had received from him on the fatal night of the discovery were endorsed with his name, which was noticed by those who received them from him. Those men might at once be brought forward as proofs of there having been some connexion between them, and consequently give reason for every suspicion.

Orlando's tenacity in this respect rendered the idea of suspicion nearly as horrible as confirmation. The reflexion almost drove him to distraction: and to such a height did he carry his enthusiasm, that there is little doubt (although his actions gave but faint proofs of his resolution) that he would have preferred instant death to the loss of that fame he so dearly valued.

The threats of the monk had the most powerful effect upon him; and after some time he, with evident reluctance, consented to the proposed scheme.

Theodosius delivered him the powder in a small phial; and, after cautioning him against a failure in this second undertaking,

he disappeared. Orlando remained for some moments entranced in thought. The deed he was going to commit weighed heavy at his heart, while his ideas of the supernatural powers of the monk increased. That Theodosius should be acquainted with the route he had taken, which he had not himself determined upon when he left the castle of Olvernardo, was equally strange as that he should so suddenly appear to him in that dreary and solitary place. Every circumstance seemed contrived for their interview on this spot, which was the very situation for Theodosius's purpose. The task that Orlando had now to fulfil was very different from the former one, where his passions were to be gratified in the execution, which at once served to prevent his reflecting on the enormity of it.

Premeditated murder was too sudden a step from those errors he had already practised for him to look upon it with indifference. The regular gradations he had undergone were not sufficient to preserve a near affinity between his last crime and that

into which he was going to plunge. There was a chasm, that made the stride he had promised to take horrible even in idea ; and he sickened at the recollection of his agreement to fulfil it. He called on the name of the monk to recant ; but no one appeared. One moment he resolved to dash the phial upon the ground on which he stood ; but the next brought to his mind all the horrors of public infamy.

Under this state of irresolution he walked towards the house, and, entering the apartment he had left, found the same party at supper, and understood they were going to remain there for the night. He was rallied on having remained so long on his ramble, and invited to partake of their repast. Orlando's distressed state of mind was easily perceived by all present. He made a trifling excuse for it ; and attempted to eat, but was unable to swallow a mouthful. His agitation was extreme : and he inwardly shuddered every time his eyes met those of the stranger. He had assumed a fictitious name. Being addressed by that appellation, to which he was unused, added

to his perturbation, and made him neglect to answer to it several times in the course of the conversation. In short, his manners immediately conveyed the idea of conscious guilt; and it was not difficult to perceive, by the countenances of the visitors, that their suspicions were raised. The room in which they sat was extensive; and his companions, having withdrawn from the table where they had taken their supper, left Orlando alone to finish his. The stranger's drink remained in the place where he had left it; and Orlando, perceiving this was not an opportunity to be missed to execute his dreaded purpose, with trembling hands emptied the fatal contents of the phial into the glass, while he scarcely breathed through terror and apprehension. He dared not turn his head, and his hands shook so violently that he was unable to help the victuals to his mouth. The stranger called for his beverage, and the waiter had taken it to him some minutes before Orlando removed his eyes from the part where it stood. He repented of what he had done; but there was now no alternative: he well knew

any attempt to remove the glass would create suspicions, and perhaps discover the act.

Orlando had never experienced such pangs of horror as he now felt. He mechanically followed the stranger's drink to the other table, and seated himself, without being sensible of his actions. The perspiration of guilty remorse hung upon his face, and every attempt to compose himself only increased his agony. The stranger had not yet attempted to taste his liquor since it had received the poison. The efforts of both the lean and lusty Spaniards seemed fruitless to draw him into conversation: his languid eye was fixed upon vacancy: his pale yet expressive face seldom relaxed into a smile: a settled melancholy pervaded his countenance; but it was of that kind which commanded the sympathy of the beholder.

"I presume, noble signior," said the lusty gentleman, "by what you have eaten, you don't like ollapodridas? Now I often enjoy myself upon them vastly."

"Enjoy!" cried the other: "you are made up of enjoyments: it would better become

you to be a little more miserable.—Shocking times, signior!” he continued, addressing himself to the stranger.

Both these observations were answered by a slight inclination of the head, and several others were made with as little effect.

In the mean time Orlando’s distress increased. He was asked if he was unwell, but he answered in the negative.

At length the stranger was taking up his glass with an intent to drink :—Orlando uttered an inward exclamation of horror.

The landlord was at that moment inquiring of the former in what name he should make out his bill, and the stranger answered, Alphonso de Mellas.

Orlando started from his seat; his eyes became fixed; a shivering sensation ran through every vein; his blood curdled with horror; his feelings were momentary—an attempt to express them would have been folly: he aimed at the fatal drink which the stranger was just lifting to his lips, and dashed the goblet from his hand. The liquor was lost, and the glass broken into a thousand pieces.

Orlando neither heard nor saw any more,

and instantly fell senseless on the floor. The whole house was in confusion; his recovery was but slow; and he asked, before his senses were perfectly returned, if the stranger had drunk his beverage? The impropriety of the question immediately flashed upon his mind, and his distress was extreme. Before he retired to his chamber, he mentioned that he was subject to such fits; and Otto, who had been called to assist his master, joined in this assertion. After some little time he took leave of the company, and was supported by his servant to his apartment.

Otto expressed the utmost concern for his indisposition, and offered to remain in the room to attend upon him during the night.

Orlando, however, wished only to be alone, and Otto withdrew.

The emotions which he had suffered during the last few hours were far more violent than he had ever remembered to have felt. He could scarcely believe himself awake, or that the whole train of events which he had witnessed were but a mere troublesome dream. He had strong reasons to suppose the stranger was his father, who

for many years had been considered as numbered with the dead. The various reflexions to which this idea gave rise were too intricate for particular description. Mingled sensations of joy and horror, of shame and contrition, rushed upon his mind; and if a violent flood of tears had not occasioned him relief, it is likely they would have thrown him into a state of distraction.

There was little doubt but there might be others of the name of Alphonso de Melas besides his father, and this idea for a moment seemed to annihilate the former one: but he felt no alleviation from it: on the contrary, he was more miserable. The thoughts produced by having thus suddenly become possessed of a parent were capable of occasioning a ray of joy even in the bosom of Orlando. He considered what would have been his felicity, could he have thrown himself into his arms without the mortifying thought that he disgraced him. Never did he regret his errors with greater poignancy than at this moment; never did they appear with more glaring deformity than when they thus stood between him

and his father. Although labouring under a confusion of intellect the most horrid, he had a wish, even before he left the apartment below, to have thrown himself at the feet of this Alphonso de Mellas. There was a something in his countenance and manners which convinced him it was unnecessary to inquire if he was his parent, and he languished to embrace him under that title. But he instantly recollected the danger of such precipitation; his pride was hurt at the mere thought of standing before him as a culprit. If he was anxious to conceal his crimes from the eyes of the world in general, he was even more so to secrete them from those by whom he had a still stronger wish to be respected.

He was afraid the extravagance of his emotions had in part betrayed him. He dreaded the approach of day with all the terror of a guilty conscience: he knew not but it might find him a prisoner, under the charge of attempting to destroy his own father.

Sleep was banished from his pillow; his body was scorched with a feverish heat, and

his eyes wandered round the gloomy chamber in which he slept, with an almost delirious anxiety. A dim lamp burned in an obscure part of it: he was unable to bear even its faint rays, and he drew the curtains of the bed still closer round him, to shade the feeble melancholy light.

After some time he fell into a disturbed slumber: his burning brain delineated objects the most awful and terrific: he awoke with a cry of horror, and, starting up in the bed, pulled back the curtains he had so lately closed,—when he again beheld the form of Theodosius the monk. Orlando shrunk back with an involuntary groan; he had fastened his chamber door with great care after Otto had left him, to prevent intrusion; but neither time nor situation was a bar against the presence of the priest. He appeared at periods when he was least expected, and when the sight of him might be considered as a miracle.

His face seemed more than commonly pale, and the sound of his voice resembled the knell of death.

“Again you have deceived me!” he

cried in a low tone. "In this present hour I might have left you to your destiny, and the first rays of to-morrow's sun would have shone on you charged with the attempted assassination of your own father. But I would not so soon annihilate the power I possess over you. Your fate is in my hands, and I can wind it to the awful crisis at my pleasure. The buzz of suspicion already accuses you with a design to take life; the pusillanimity of your manner discovered the deed you was in the act of perpetrating; and, without an immediate escape, you will be made a prisoner in your bed. We shall meet again hereafter."

The form of the monk slowly moved towards an obscure part of the chamber, and his figure was lost in the gloom which surrounded it. Orlando could with difficulty believe the reality of what had passed. He began to conceive his senses were deranged, and he made an effort to recollect the occurrences of the last few hours with some degree of composure: but his head became dizzy with such remembrances; a cold perspiration bedewed his limbs; and he remain-

ed in a state of inexpressible torture, irresolute with respect to the plans he should pursue, without mind to determine or power to execute them.

CHAP. XIX.

Oh, tyrant conscience! how dost thou afflict me!
 When I look back, 'tis terrible retreating:
 I cannot bear the thought, nor dare repent:
 I am but man, and, Fate, do thou dispose me.

SHAKSPEARE.

ORLANDO was awakened in the course of an hour, from the reverie in which he had fell, by several soft taps at the door of his chamber. His distracted mind instantly pictured the officers of justice coming to seize him. He breathed short with alarm, and listened with the horrid expectation of hearing the corregidor enter the apartment by force. In a few minutes, however, his fears were in some measure relieved by the voice of Otto through the key-whole; who, in a kind of whisper, requested he would let him in. Orlando started from his bed, and with trembling hands unlocked the door.

Otto's countenance bore all the marks of terror and affright. He informed his

master that he had taken up his lodging in an out-house, near which two male servants belonging to the landlord also slept. It was but a slight partition which parted them; and Otto by this means had an opportunity of hearing their discourse, which he soon found too interesting to be neglected. It turned on the behaviour of Orlando during supper; and one informed the other that his master had very strong suspicions of the drink which Orlando had thrown down; that the remains, which had stained the floor, had been examined, and that there appeared to be some drug mixed with it. On this account he had resolved on an excuse to detain him the next morning; and was determined, if it failed, to arrest him on the charge, and in the mean time to dispatch a man to the nearest magistrate to provide proper persons to secure him. Otto had stopped to hear no more; but had carefully crept to his master's chamber, to acquaint him with the alarming information.

Orlando now perceived the prophecy of the monk fulfilled: he appeared encom-

passed with horrors the most dreadful, and he listened to Otto's entreaties to fly instantly from the inn without answering or appearing to hear them. His mind was oppressed and bewildered: he sunk under its weight, and appeared to droop into that torpid state which threatened an immediate loss of reason. Otto proposed that they should directly quit the house, which at the present moment it was easy to accomplish without discovery, as the whole of the family were retired to rest, and the horses could be prepared in a few minutes. Orlando gave a kind of passive consent, and by the assistance of his servant was soon dressed. He had discharged his bill, having before determined to set off at an early hour in the morning. They proceeded softly to the stable; where Otto in a short time having prepared their horses, they left the place with considerable speed, and before day-light in the morning found themselves several miles distant from it.

Orlando had consented to this arrangement, merely because it had been strongly urged by Otto. His mind was in that fer-

ment which disorders the whole system, and rendered him totally unable to act for himself.

They took no direct road, for fear of being traced; but turned in several directions, to keep as much as possible out of a line with the part they had quitted. Orlando rode at a considerable pace. He spoke but little during their journey. A feverish heat seemed rapidly to increase over his whole body; his countenance became flushed with a hectic glow of colour; and he was anxious to wet his parched and trembling lips at every brook they passed.

Towards the latter part of the day he suddenly became faint and weak, complained of violent pains in his head, and cold shiverings. He was himself aware that he had every symptom of the approach of a violent fever, and desired Otto to look out for some retired cottage, where they might take up their abode for the night, in preference to an inn. This arrangement reminded him to search for his purse; when, to his infinite chagrin and mortification, he

recollected he had left it behind him. The only money he possessed was a few pistoles, which by chance had remained in his pockets; and the circumstances under which he had departed frustrated all hopes of ever recovering it. He now saw himself reduced to poverty, and his character in danger of being publicly blasted, while his frame shook under the approach of a violent and dangerous disease, which threatened the most dreadful consequences. He communicated the horrors of his situation to Otto; and Otto did all in his power to comfort him. He said he had a little money in his pocket, which should be heartily at his service; and that he could have no higher gratification than in sharing it with his beloved master. Orlando could only answer him with a burning tear: he was almost incapable of holding his seat on the saddle. Otto was in part obliged to support him upon his horse; and he perceived his master would not be able to ride many miles further.

They were now on a barren heath, which

proved of far greater extent than they expected. Not a house or hovel was to be seen in the gloomy prospect.

The last rays of the setting sun had left a strong mellow light in the illuminated horizon. The heavy broken ground, in part covered with thick brush-wood, added to a few solitary trees placed at considerable distances from each other, gave the view a melancholy and desolate appearance. Nor were Orlando and his servant inappropriate figures in the landscape. The strong ferocious features of the former, contrasted with the melancholy desponding countenance of the latter, as they gazed with bursting eyes on the glorious orb, at once rendered them a group perfectly characteristic with the scenery which surrounded them.

They proceeded slowly forward, while Otto anxiously looked out for some human dwelling to which he might convey his master.

After some little time they arrived at a gradual declivity, which appeared to wind to the left. It was a rugged road, and the

termination was lost to the view by the direction which it took.

Otto resolved to follow this track, and turned accordingly. They had not proceeded far, when they perceived slight volumes of smoke behind some dark foliage, at no great distance. They immediately conjectured they were near a habitation, and directly rode towards the spot. They were not mistaken: a gloomy cottage, almost surrounded with trees, presented itself to their sight. The building appeared to be ancient, and chiefly composed of rugged stones, with little attention either to beauty or taste. The front was almost covered with ivy, which spread over the windows, and seemed as if it were intended to shade the light of heaven from those who lived within. There was no time to be lost in an application to their humanity. Orlando was now so extremely ill, that it was with great difficulty he could hold the reins of his horse. Otto alighted and knocked at the door, which was opened by an old decrepit woman, apparently

seventy years of age. He desired to be informed if he could speak with the master of the cottage; and was answered in the affirmative. After having disappeared for a few moments, she returned, accompanied by a man who seemed about forty. His dress was extremely rude and rustic, but perfectly neat and clean; his form was shrunk and wasted; his countenance pale, melancholy, and dejected; and his manner languid and gloomy. Otto briefly related to him the illness of his master; who, he said, was travelling towards Toledo, but was now incapable of supporting himself another mile. That they had entered upon the heath without being aware of its extent, and had fortunately discovered his cottage, where they hoped his benevolence would prompt him to permit them to remain for that night. The cottager at the first moment appeared somewhat suspicious of their intentions; but the looks of Orlando were sufficient to prove the principal part of Otto's narrative. In dismounting, he fainted in the arms of his servant, and it was a considerable time before he reco-

vered. After some little hesitation, their request was agreed to; and the horses being placed in an old barn at some little distance, Otto joined his master in the kitchen of the cottage. It was fitted up in a neat and comfortable manner. The old woman was desired to prepare a chamber above for their guest. He was unable to take any refreshment, and was conveyed to his bed as soon as it was ready for him. The following morning confirmed the symptoms of a violent fever, which appeared the night before. He was in a high delirium, and his removal was considered as dangerous in the extreme. No medical advice was to be procured for many miles; and Otto had reasons for keeping up that objection to any being called in. The cottager behaved with the utmost humanity, and assisted himself to pay every attention Orlando so greatly required. For several days his dissolution was expected hourly. The old woman had been used to attend upon the sick, and she treated him with the utmost tenderness. Otto never quitted his chamber: and he contrived, as well as

he was able, to keep both their host and his servant out at those periods when his master's insanity was at the greatest height, for he then uttered many things he most strenuously wished to conceal. The behaviour of this man during Orlando's indisposition may for the moment appear contradictory to the character already given of him: but it is to be considered his own interest was consulted in such conduct: it was by no means his wish that Orlando should die; he had still plans in view which his recovery could only accomplish; and consequently he used every exertion in his power to save him from the ravages of the disease under which he suffered.

It was three weeks before he was supposed to be out of danger. Nature had in part taken its course: the medicines which had been administered to him by the cottager were composed of simple herbs, but his knowledge of the malady seemed uncommonly correct. Orlando remained in a weak low state for a long time after the fever had quitted him, and his reflexions did not aid his recovery. He had no means of repaying

his host for the trouble and expense which he had occasioned. His pride was shocked at the idea of leaving the cottage without a reparation, even though it was not demanded; and the consideration of what method he was to pursue after he had left it was equally tormenting. If he returned to the castle of Olvernardo, some explanation would of course be required; nor was he certain but his behaviour to Cassandra might be by this time known. If he wrote to his uncle, he would be necessitated to give reasons for his not having returned to Madrid, and likewise some place of address for his letters. Every plan he thought upon was equally unsatisfactory, because there was a danger in them of his character being degraded. In the mean time, as he gradually grew better, he had an opportunity of observing, with some attention, the disposition and manners of his host. Under the garb of a cottager there was easily to be perceived a refinement of manners totally unsuitable to his outward appearance; and though he at times evidently endeavoured to conceal such symptoms, still they had been too much grafted

in his education to be entirely lost. The principal feature in his character seemed an attempt to despise the world, and rail at all that belonged to it. His conversation often turned on this subject, and Orlando oftentimes defended those points which he knew he would condemn, on purpose to draw his ideas more strongly upon them. He talked of the excess of vanity, the unjustness of principles, and illiberality of sentiments in mankind in general ; while he congratulated himself on the happiness he enjoyed in being placed at a distance from those scenes in which they were engaged. Yet, amidst all this boast of enviable felicity, it was by no means difficult to discover he was not actually the happy man he in vain attempted to persuade himself. If languid melancholy and gloomy listlessness could be termed happiness and serenity, he might be allowed to enjoy them. He read much, and he determined in himself to be gratified with the amusement. But this gratification did not prevent his thoughts wandering from his book ; and although he believed himself highly delighted with the author, it was a chance if he

recollected the subject of the passage he had perused ten minutes after he quitted it. He walked much, and resolved to gather entertainment from the study of nature in her most simple garb. But the continual repetition of such modes of amusement at last made them irksome ; and often as he viewed the wild rose of the forest with a gaze of seeming admiration, not even a faint outline of its form was sketched on his mind, or the most trivial of its beauties considered or regarded. When he spoke of the world, it is true he railed at it with peculiar bitterness ; but a tear would oftentimes start from his eye as he repeated his invectives ; while his reproaches appeared like the upbraidings of a parent on the vices of a beloved child. Orlando understood he had been immured in his present retirement upwards of twenty years. He was silent as to his history before this period, and seemed studious to avoid any conversation that might lead to it. Orlando gained strength daily : he had now been an inhabitant of the cottage six weeks, and he began to think of quitting it ; but the consideration of the low state

of his finances distressed and harassed him. To make his host amends was at present the principal use for which he needed money; but he could think of no expedient to relieve his pecuniary embarrassments. During his reflexions one evening on this point, as he strolled across a little paddock adjoining the cottage, he by chance took up a paper which lay before him, and read the following lines.

THE WITHERED VIOLET *.

“ SWEET flower! and is thy blue eye closed,
That open’d to the morning ray?
And are thy charms so soon expos’d
To droop and moulder in decay?—

“ Like thee, till Julia touch’d my heart
I smiled in life’s auspicious morn;
Each gale that pass’d could charms impart,
On every breeze my bliss was borne.

“ Like thee, I flourish’d for a while
In Julia’s smile, in Julia’s eye;
But now thrown off, denied that smile,
Like thee I droop, like thee I die.

“ And when thou bidd’st thy sweets expand,
And when thou yield’st thy parting breath,

* Author unknown.—See Preface.

To scatter fragrance o'er the hand

That crops thy flower, that seals thy death—

“ 'Tis but like me, who, doom'd to sigh,

Condemn'd by Julia's frowns to smart,

Yet still must bless that scornful eye,

Yet still must love that cruel heart.”

Orlando had little doubt but it belonged to the recluse. The composition of his, at once confirmed him to be a man of taste and education; and he could not but wonder at the strange events which caused him to abandon the world, and screen himself from all society in so melancholy a spot. His thoughts upon this subject caused him to wander further than usual; the dark shadows of approaching night had already diffused a gloomy tint over the surrounding scenery; and he altered his direction with an intent to turn towards the cottage, when Theodosius the monk suddenly stood before him.

Orlando felt considerably awed at his presence: these extraordinary visits at once perplexed and astonished him: all his actions seemed to confirm the popular belief of his supernatural power, and he listened to the sound of his voice with dread and

apprehension: his countenance appeared less ferocious than usual.

“ Orlando,” he exclaimed, “ you again behold me : my presence is, as usual, unexpected, but the circumstances under which you are concerned are not unknown to me. I am aware of the loss of your money, and the difficulties to which it has exposed you. I know your feelings on the occasion, and am sensible of your distress. You are convinced you are in my power : twice have you failed in the services I required of you ; but there are others which I yet need : my influence must not be forfeited ; you must still remain my slave. On these terms you have a right to those aids which, at certain crises in your fate, from peculiar circumstances, I am able to bestow. Your host conceals a treasure of considerable amount near yonder pedestal in his garden : order your servant, if you can trust him, to dig to-morrow at midnight three feet to the eastward of its base, and he will find at no great depth a square metal chest of small dimensions, which contains upwards of four thousand pistoles, in current gold coin.

and notes of large amount. It may be easily broke open: let him replace it after receiving its contents, and be careful to cover the ground so as to prevent suspicions of the theft. Quit the cottage on the following day, and repair immediately to the city of Murcia. You are there totally unknown, and have liberty to enjoy every pleasure with the gold you will possess. Use no parsimony in looking forward to futurity: your resources shall not end here: various shall be the plans you will discover for accumulating a capital with sums superior to the present; and while they are capable of procuring you happiness, your felicity shall be complete. Meet me after a week from this day at midnight, under the porch of the cathedral in Murcia, where I will impart to you certain events which must take place in that city, and explain to you the most safe and easy methods to execute them."

Orlando's eyes glistened with joy while the monk disclosed the purport of his visit; but when the robbing of his host (from whom he had received such humanity) was

proposed, he felt a pang of guilty apprehension; his countenance turned pale; and his trembling lips exclaimed with some emotion—

“ Must I then commit theft upon this man, who has nourished me in sickness, whose humanity has preserved my existence?”

“ Fool !” cried the monk, while his features resumed all their austerity, “ do you moralise upon the deed? Were your feelings so delicate at that moment when you seized the notes from the escritoir of the marquis d’Olvernardo? Do you now reflect upon the enormity of taking from your host, or reckon upon the crime of robbing your best friend? Was not the former the sickly plan of your own feeble brain? Can you descant upon the virtues it displayed?” These words seemed to strike to the soul of Orlando: he promised punctually to follow the directions of the monk, whose form he suddenly lost in the midst of some thick foliage at a little distance.

After waiting a short time to compose himself, he returned to the cottage and supped

with his host; but immediately the meal was concluded he complained of a violent headache, and retired to his chamber. Here he had an opportunity to reflect freely upon his last interview with the monk. Although he was sensible of the ingratitude of the act he was going to commit, yet he felt not that horror and repugnance in the execution of it which were powerful enough to shadow the glowing prospect of possessing the money of the recluse. In these reflexions the regular progression of vice was to be traced with peculiar accuracy. The enormity of the last act which Orlando attempted to commit was a principal cause to lessen in his mind the magnitude of any other he might be inclined to pursue. He had been on the point of murdering his own father: he shuddered at the thought; every vicious deed, when placed in comparison with it, appeared trivial, and lost the chief part of its horrors. To rob his host Orlando was conscious was a most flagrant breach of gratitude. At a period when he had never attempted a greater crime, the poignant sensations which he experienced

in a similar act have been already described; but now his first consideration was to place it in comparison with a deed of murder; in consequence of which its darkest tints of atrocity vanished in the still deeper shades of that before which it was held in opposition.

For these reasons he mused upon the scheme proposed by the monk to replenish his finances with considerable calmness, and already began to anticipate the pleasures he should enjoy at Murcia, when no check would be put upon the gratification of them.

Strange and intricate are the contrasted passions which agitate the human breast. Orlando had dwelled upon the idea of leaving his host without a liberal amends for his benevolence, with all the uneasiness and regret which would have been experienced by one possessed of the nicest sentiments of honour and the most upright principles of moral justice and general philanthropy: yet he anxiously grasped at the opportunity to rob him of his whole fortune, and determined, with perfect satisfaction, to make him the pecuniary present he wished, with

a part of the very property he intended to procure by a daring and impious theft. He had no fears either of Otto's refusal to dig for the money, or of trusting him with his design of taking it. He had already witnessed enough of his character to know he did not stand upon *punctilios* when his interest was concerned; and so greatly had the finesse of this artful domestic worked upon him, that he conceived himself perfectly safe in his power.

The following morning he mentioned to his host his intention to pursue his journey the next day. The cottager appeared distressed at the idea of losing his company. The reclused manner in which he lived again became the topic of conversation. Orlando once more expressed his surprise at finding such an inhabitant in so desolate a spot, and was answered in the following manner:—

“I will confess to you, Don Orlando, you are the only mortal I have seen, except one, since my residence in this part, whom I have experienced the least desire either to retain as a friend, or to whom I would communicate those few trivial events in my life

which occasioned me to abandon the world, and immure myself in this cottage. We have often talked of the inconsistencies, the follies, and the vices of mankind, and our opinions have been nearly the same. We have both condemned them, and viewed them with perfect contempt. To you, then, I may surely impart the circumstances which forced me into retirement. There is nothing in them either striking or uncommon; they were merely a few of the general occurrences of life, which every mortal is born to encounter, though there are some better calculated for the task than others. I confess my insufficiency in this respect. Reared with an unusual indulgence through the first few infant years of my existence, I became unable to brook disappointment or endure adversity, when I felt them inflicted by instruments equally base and contemptible."

The cottager then began his little narrative in the following manner.

MEMOIRS OF DON FRANCIS VALVARD.

I AM the only child of a respectable citizen of Madrid, who, by an uncommon series of good fortune, in receiving a large dowry with his wife, and several good legacies from different relations, added to a very flourishing business, found himself enabled at an early period to quit the fatigues of a mercantile life with a competency sufficient to support his family, not only with comfort but splendor. He accordingly retired to a beautiful estate some distance from the city. Don Alan (for such was my father's name) was accounted a proud and haughty Spaniard. From the common multitude an appellation of this kind was by no means new, and his behaviour might at times give too great cause for such an opinion. He possessed extreme nice notions of honour; laid the greatest stress upon forms and ceremonies of every description; and in his capacity as a magistrate (to which station he was elevated soon after he quitted business) he was always severe in his punishments of vice,

and as liberal in his rewards of virtue. But even these qualifications were not sufficient to make him a man of the people : he never flattered or fawned before them in public ; he never made flourishing promises which he had no idea of fulfilling, or talked loudly of considering their interests while he thought and acted only for his own. He seldom distributed his charitable benefactions himself; and consequently those whom he employed to convey his good deeds to the world shared the principal part of the credit in bestowing them. In short, Don Alan was a good man without being thought so : he practised virtues, yet never received in return the gratitude of his fellow-creatures : he often heard the highest praises lavished upon the man whom he had made the almoner of his benevolence, while his own character was attacked with a scurrility equally cruel and disgraceful. About this period I had attained my twentieth year : considerable pains had been taken with my education, and I was already allowed to be a scholar of no inconsiderable merit. For some time past I had observed, perhaps with

more penetration and reflexion than was usual for one at my age, the little popularity which my father derived from the many worthy deeds he performed. I thirsted to become a distributor of his charities ; for I had even yet studied human nature enough to perceive that the very essence of his goodness was lost by the manner in which he circulated it. I discovered that, to be idolised by the world, it was not only requisite that a man should be privately charitable, but that he should himself condescend to be the executor of his beneficence, and relieve the miseries of his fellow-creatures rather with his own hand than by that of another. I requested my father to let me be his almoner ; I languished to share the encomiums which I was certain his contributions, when concentrated in one giver, would produce ; and I likewise encouraged a hope, that by such means I might be able to convince him my hypothesis was correct, to which I had often in vain attempted to make him a convert. It would be useless to describe the pleasure I received in this task. Far from taking pains to im-

press on the minds of the objects whom I assisted, that the gift they received was intended to demand from them an abject or slavish submission to the donor, I took every opportunity to convey contrary sentiments, and that the pleasure of rendering others happy was the chief felicity I derived from their relief. I need not say that I remained but a short time without reaping the fruits of my exertions; my name was uttered with a general buz of admiration for many miles round our dwelling; I became universally respected and adored: when I walked out, blessings were called down upon me by both men and women of various ages and conditions, and they even taught their children to lisp forth prayers in my behalf. I will confess to you, Don Orlando, this kind of public glare on my character gratified my vanity; and I inquired of my father, with some degree of exultation, if I had not proved my assertions with respect to the distribution of his wealth. I however by no means perceived that satisfaction in his countenance which I expected, and after some little time he

addressed me as near as I can recollect in the following manner.

“ Francis, your conduct of late has not been lost upon me : I have watched it with all the anxiety of a parent : I have striven to trace your actions to the most favourable source, and attempted to dive into the secret recesses of your mind with more than ordinary care and attention. I am confident it will surprise and hurt your feelings to say, I am by no means gratified with my discoveries. I can well anticipate your disappointment, after having deceived yourself with false notions of your own worthiness, to be told by one, who you are certain would commend if he could, that you are gradually falling under the most egregious errors, and perhaps approaching, by imperceptible degrees, to a character equally mean and despicable.”

My countenance changed at these words ; a faint flush of anger spread over my cheek ; but it instantly became pale again, and I could scarcely conceal my tears.

My father continued without interruption :—“ I observe these words affect you. You feel not more anguish than I who deli-

ver them ; but, as it is a duty incumbent on me to explain to a beloved son those errors which by experience I am more competent to judge upon, as to their consequences, than himself, I will endeavour, however irksome the task may be, to convince you that your conduct for these last few months, although considered by yourself as highly meritorious, will in the abstract prove to be extremely reproachable. Be assured that the essence of charity consists not in the publicity of its donations. He who relieves the sufferings of his fellow-creatures principally with a view of the applause he may procure from the act, neither experiences the true sensations of a benevolent heart, nor possesses that philanthropy which his actions seem to indicate. The true reward of the good deeds of a good man is the inward satisfaction he experiences in alleviating the sorrows of those whose misfortunes demand his aid : it signifies but little to him, whether the thanks of the object are publicly delivered, or delivered at all ; he only wishes to know that their misery is decreased ; he is indifferent as to the know-

ledge they may have of his services ;—such an idea does not even slightly interest him.

“ I heard with concern the observations you made to me respecting the little public praise I received from my benefactions. I forbore at the moment to rebuke your opinions with that warmth which should tend to annihilate them. I resolved to let you proceed farther with your experiment, that I might gain stronger proofs to convince you of your error. Can you say that you would have given the sums which you have lately circulated for me, with equal pleasure, had you been convinced that the world would never have been acquainted with your gifts, and even the persons relieved remained ignorant of their benefactor? Surely not. You well knew your principal aim was to acquire popularity, to be adored by the multitude, to be publicly held up as a model to your fellow-creatures. Even policy would not countenance such modes of proceeding. You are little aware, my son, how transient are the encomiums for which you languish ; you have not a conception by what trivial circumstances they may be

lost. He who attempts to please all, must acquiesce to very different sentiments and opinions: he must resign every principle of his own, and become the mean pretended assentor to those of another. Believe me, it is the duty of a man to stand unprejudiced an independent member of the community into which he is classed. Let him boldly assert those motives by which he regulates his conduct, with sincerity and truth; let no lurking equivocal thoughts rankle in his bosom; let his words come from his heart, and he will never fear a repetition of them. Such a man, should he possess erroneous notions, by a free confession will be open to conviction, and by candidly viewing the arguments on each side will be always sure to correct them. No one has a right to form his actions to the dictates of others, unless he feels a conviction in his mind that they are consistent with his own good and that of society. It is surely a folly too often to be seen both in the religion and politics of a country, for a particular axiom to be laid

down by a certain class of men, which is to be immediately assented to, without the most slight investigation to prove that it is correct. Do we not daily hear tenets of faith solemnly affirmed to be believed by those, who are even ignorant of the grounds upon which they are formed? Can such be termed true believers?—No: they deceive themselves and the world by pretending to be so, and insensibly act with a duplicity which under other circumstances they would despise. Take but time to consult your own heart, and you will find that your motives often vary materially from those which your actions would indicate. When such is the case, fly not from an examination of the causes; rather search deeply into them, and abide by none but what will bear the result of every charge. Had you taken such precautions on your first onset in your charitable career, you would soon have discovered (though perhaps with reluctance) the fallacy of your supposed beneficence: you would have been unable to brook the idea of acting in a man-

ner degrading to your feelings, and your errors would of course been reformed. Be assured, my son, that to study only an acquirement of the name of virtue, is a pursuit equally dangerous and deceiving, which tends to the worst consequences, and may be productive of the most alarming conclusions. When interest is any way concerned in the donation of charity, where gratification or reward is expected separate from the genuine felicity of doing a good act, or where the tributes of friendship and respect are practised under selfish hopes of future advantage, how despicable does the vender of such offerings appear! how paltry are his views! how insignificant and passive do those deeds seem, which for the moment are considered as so animating and brilliant! Reflect, Francis, seriously reflect on your own sensations: I am persuaded the erroneous parts of your conduct will instantly become too glaring for defence, and that you will accede to the opinion of your father, that private charity is the principal legitimate offspring of a benevolent heart."

Such was the substance, as near as I can recollect, of the rebuke of Don Alan. I had little to say in my behalf; his observations flashed on my mind with the strongest conviction, and I retired to my chamber overwhelmed with distress and confusion. In our next interview I confessed my error: he clasped me to his heart with fervency, while tears of affection started from his eyes.

For the future my conduct became more similar to that of my father: I was still the donor of his charities, but did not take so much pains to be considered as such. I began to pay less attention to the opinions of the world, and regulated my conduct chiefly by the dictates of my conscience. My father would now often advise me to be careful of extremes in either point. He would sometimes say, "Although I do not wish you to be the slave of the world, at the same time by no means despise it. I cannot more plainly elucidate the system I wish you to pursue than by its similitude to an acquaintance whom I would not have you take to your bosom with enthusiastic

warmth, nor at the same time throw off with supercilious contempt."

Although my father cautioned me against such extremes, it is certain he himself rather inclined to the latter one. I was at that crisis in life when a medium is seldom preserved. I gradually imbibed an affected distaste for society, although I had not the resolution to abandon it. In the course of a few years I had the misfortune to lose the best of parents, and I inherited the chief part of his wealth, except some legacies to very distant relations. I had now no opportunity of receiving any checks to the notions I had acquired. I became surrounded by a set of flatterers, who commended every whim or prejudice I conceived, and who always made a point to say as I did. Upon those wretches I squandered away a considerable part of my property, and looked upon the rest of the world as far below my notice.

About four years after the decease of my father, I happened, by chance, (for such condescensions were not common with me) to visit one of my tenants: I became suddenly struck with the beauty of his

daughter. I instantly perceived this girl had made an impression upon me not easily to be erased. It was in vain I attempted to overcome it: Julia was constantly before my eyes. My peace of mind appeared flown: I became wretched and dejected. At times I reflected on the probability of my being able to possess her without marriage: but my soul recoiled at the idea, when I considered the misery I should bring on a worthy family; when I thought upon the tears I should draw from the eyes of her aged parents, and the wretched situation to which I should reduce her whom I loved. I abandoned the idea with horror; and at length came to the resolution of sacrificing to my pride, and placing the ridicule of my acquaintance at defiance, by offering her my hand. This offer, I will confess to you with shame, Don Orlando, was made in that manner which seemed to convey a sense of the obligation I conferred; but how shall I express my chagrin and disappointment when Julia, far from being elated at the golden proposal, appeared distressed at the question, and at

last positively refused the honour which I profered ! My astonishment was equal to my distress : I had not entertained a doubt of her readiness to grasp at so advantageous a match, and I flattered myself her conduct might perhaps proceed from mere diffidence. But I was soon undeceived in this suggestion. I understood from her parents I had a rival. The old people seemed to regret much the obstinacy of their daughter ; and although they did not wish publicly to interfere with her inclinations, I could easily perceive I had in them most powerful advocates for my wishes. I found the lover of Julia was a poor country lad, whom her father had taken into his house to assist him with his little farm. My pride was most severely wounded at her refusal to my addresses. For the moment I determined never to repeat them : but I soon discovered such resolves would be impossible ; the idea of her becoming the wife of another distracted me ; and I at length dwindled into the humble and importunate suitor. My assiduities, seconded by the

continual entreaties of her parents, seemed to shake her constancy; and after thirteen months close courtship I had the felicity to call Julia my own.

During three years, in which time my wife presented me with a son, I enjoyed uninterrupted happiness; and had every reason to suppose I should experience both comfort and satisfaction in the choice I had made. Oh God! how was I deceived! May my fate prove a sufficient caution to you, Don Orlando, never to attempt to alter the fixed affections of a woman! Julia, neglectful of the vows which she made at the altar, unmoved by my tenderness, and insensible to those affections she should have experienced for her infant, still languished for her first choice; fled from both me and my child to fly into his arms; and refused all attempts to cover her infamy, by abandoning her paramour, and secluding herself from the world. It would be a folly to attempt to describe the agonies under which I suffered at the conduct of my wife: my love for her

was not of that flimsy texture which made me careless of my own honour or her reputation ; nor could I tear her image from my bosom, ungrateful as she was, without the most strenuous and agonising efforts. At length I resolved to fly from society, where I conceived myself pointed at for the frailties of Julia, and abandon the world, in which my prospects appeared the most cheerless and gloomy. In meditating a seclusion of this kind, I acted perhaps with rather a pettish precipitancy. I conceived I had means of enjoyment in the resources of my own mind ; and I considered man as so independent a being, that he was capable not only of existing, but even possessing those sweets which make existence desirable, without the aid or society of his fellow-creatures. Under these motives, cherished by wounded pride and flagrant ingratitude, I immediately commenced arrangements to fulfil my scheme ; and the little activity that it required seemed in a great measure to relieve me from the oppression under which I laboured. I placed my infant son with a female domestic, who

had been in my family for many years, on whose care and tenderness I could perfectly rely; and having purchased this cottage, I removed to it, with only one servant, the woman who is at present with me. She had lived in the service of a friend for a long time. I was well convinced of her honesty and sobriety: her understanding and apprehension it was said were not acute. For those very reasons she appeared to me the most proper person I could select for my purpose. She was willing to accept the situation. I agreed with her accordingly, and have since found my reasons in the choice verified. Perhaps I might be considered by some as a happy man; perhaps I thought myself so. I have however received but three visits during my seclusion, and I have paid none.

Reading, music, writing, and drawing, have by turns employed me. But, to be sincere with you, there were moments when I could derive pleasure from neither. There were moments, Don Orlando, when I reflected on the domestic comforts I had experienced, even in the little time I might

be termed a married man ; and a retrospect of the short-lived felicity was embittered by that of my retirement, which I contrasted with it.

In the gratification of my spleen I supposed myself in some measure revenged on the world in withdrawing from it. But this was indeed a mistaken notion ; *I* was in reality the sufferer, while I ridiculously conceived I inflicted punishment on others.

I placed my son at one of the first seminaries in the province. His progress in his studies answered my fullest expectations ; and I even so far retracted from the system I had adopted, as to put up with his company for about a week every summer. It is true, the countenance of his mother (who a few years after she flew from me paid the debt of nature) shone in his face. It might be weakness, but I often shed tears on the recollection of her fate, and clasped my boy to my bosom with even greater warmth at the remembrance.

Although in the few visits he paid I conceived I should gratify him at the expense

of my own happiness, I soon found our enjoyment was mutual; and that I as anxiously counted the days which were to bring him to my arms, as he expected the hour to embrace his father.

Under these circumstances, he attained the age of one-and-twenty. As he had not been brought up to any profession, and my fortune was by no means sufficient to enable me to make a settlement upon him equal to the maintenance of a family under a genteel establishment, I so far exerted myself as to send him to one whom I had formerly known, and who had acquired considerable rank and power in Madrid since I had quitted it.

The friendship of this gentleman put me in a better humour with mankind. He received my boy with peculiar kindness, and, in the course of a few weeks, got him appointed to a lucrative situation in one of our West-India settlements. I must confess I parted with him not merely with reluctance but agony: he had become my only companion, the solace of my solitude—in

short, the support of my life. I soon felt his absence with uncommon force, my retirement lost all its charms, while his image was ever present to my mind.

It was in vain I strove to deceive myself: I languished for society; I had experienced the sweets of domestic sociality, and I could not resign them with philosophy.

But I had arrived at that age when the idea of returning to a busy world, and establishing new connexions, appeared a task of too great magnitude to be attempted. I had no relatives in Spain in whom I could obviate this difficulty. I still remained in my cottage, anxiously waiting for a letter from my son, which should inform me of his safe arrival at his place of destination.

This, after some months, I had the happiness to receive. His epistle gave me considerable pleasure. I understood from it he was likely in a short time to be promoted to a more profitable situation. It was about this period that my old servant returned one evening from her weekly visit to the town, and told me she had heard great talk of a

banditti which infested these parts, and which it was likely would, by the report of my being possessed of some fortune, make an attempt upon our dwelling.

From this hint I determined to bury the principal part of my property in a certain spot in my garden, which I could describe by letter to my son. This scheme I soon accomplished, and gave him the necessary information.

I am, however, rather apt to think the tale was recited by the town's people in jest, with an intent to alarm us both, for I have never received the least molestation.

My son held his new station but four years, when I heard from him, with considerable concern, that, owing to a change in the higher orders of government in the part where he was settled, he had lost it; and this circumstance I considered as still more unfortunate, when I heard of the death of my friend at Madrid by whose interest he had procured the situation.

Clement had likewise married, soon after his arrival, the daughter of a respectable but not a rich man; and there was the pro-

spect of a large family being the consequence of this union.

After some solicitation he was placed in a post the emoluments of which barely supported himself, wife, and two children, and was necessitated to submit to the most insulting treatment from those who gleaned the profits he should have received.

Under these circumstances, I began to consider, whether my own life, and that of my son's and his family, might not be rendered far more comfortable by a little alteration in my present system.

Be assured, Don Orlando, that he who conceives society as not materially connected with his happiness, deceives himself. The ties of kindred and friendship are not to be severed without difficulty, and the wounds are seldom healed. A man may contemplate alone the starry firmament with awful curiosity; he may reflect by himself on the beauties of vegetation, and trace the works of nature with an inquiring and philosophic eye; he may find the various resources against *ennui*, to which a cultivated mind can always fly: but there is yet a something

wanted to give a zest to all these various modes of pleasure ;—he must have some being to whom he can convey his thoughts on the subjects which pass his mind. They must not be confined ; they must not lie dormant in his own breast : his Creator formed him with powers to enjoy society, and his desires for it are not to be annihilated.

I experienced this truth in its full force. The company of my son had revived the remembrance of the social hours I had formerly experienced, and when he left me I relapsed into my usual melancholy state of despondency.

It is certain my appearance did not indicate any violent grief, and many enthusiastic admirers of seclusion might have termed it a happy one. Long have I bestowed on it myself the same appellation ; but I am at length necessitated to be more sincere, and confess, that, far from being a very happy man, I was a very miserable one.

I conceived it would be a folly not to attempt to alter my condition. I was not poor ; I had yet the means of rejoining the world, and partaking in its pleasures ; but

for those gratifications which are termed its pleasures I had little relish. I languished only for a domestic establishment. I have arrived at that time of life when indulgencies arising from such a state are most felt and most wanted. After some consideration, I determined to request the return of my son and his family. The property which I possess is adequate to support us all with comfort, though not splendor; and by these means I shall in all probability pass the remainder of my days in the bosom of my family.

I wrote to him several months past on this subject, and offered him to share my fortune in the way I have mentioned. By his answer, a few weeks since, I understood he was making immediate preparations for his departure, and I now expect hourly to embrace him.

Thus, Don Orlando, I have informed you of the principal events of my life; and although they are not very striking in themselves, yet they tend in some measure to discover the fallacy of ostentatious charity, and a pretended disgust with the world.

Believe me, signior, however happy

certain men may have been said to be in secluding themselves from their fellow-creatures, they have all, in my opinion, experienced those moments which have embittered the enjoyments they pretended to derive from such a mode of existence, and have been conscious that they deceived themselves in the plan they pursued.

A man of high spirit and superior intellects, if he meets with disappointments, feels himself galled with uncommon acuteness, because the stress which he lays upon his abilities makes him conceive he deserved better treatment. Such a man generally contracts what he supposes a disgust for the world, and conceives this little pique is tantamount to a wish to abandon it for ever. In a course of time, however, he discovers his notions are erroneous, and languishes for those scenes he quitted with contempt.

Thus ended the little history of Don Francis Valvard. Orlando listened to his narrative with attention. It produced both precept and example, on points to him

more than usually interesting, and his cheeks were overspread with a blush at many of the observations it introduced. He must have been perfectly convinced how valuable his host's little treasure was to him, when he heard the plans that were determined upon for its use. But Orlando's heart was not now susceptible to an anticipation of the misery he would occasion in robbing him of it. He considered not the horror which the old man would in all probability experience, in finding himself, his son and family, reduced to extreme poverty, after sending for the latter under the promise of bestowing on them a comfortable subsistence.

The soul of Orlando was not to be touched by what he had learned to term such puny feelings: they might have affected him at the commencement of his career towards vice, but it was now too late; he had acquired a perfect indifference to those acts, at the names of which he would then have shuddered with disgust.

He parted with Don Francis, and summoned Otto to his apartment, under the

appearance of preparing for their journey on the morrow.

He opened the plan of the robbery to this man with less diffidence than might perhaps have been expected: both master and servant began more clearly to understand each other; the traits of their characters gradually developed themselves; and they soon found it would be to their mutual interest to act with more sincerity.

Otto, as usual, heard his master's harangue and request to him with apparently considerable qualms of conscience, ejaculations, distortions of countenance, and pious exclamations; but these as usual ended with an acquiescence to the plans proposed. Otto knew where to find implements to dig, how to go about the work with remarkable facility, and hoped to bring it to a happy termination.

It was resolved that he should retain fifty pistoles, which Orlando would want before he left the cottage; and should carry the remainder to a convenient hiding-place about a league distant, as it would be impossible for them to convey it away with

their luggage without being liable to discovery.

These circumstances being settled, Orlando again returned to his host, whose conversation chiefly consisted on the fervency of his expectations in the comfort and felicity he should enjoy on the arrival of his son.

“Never, Don Orlando,” said he, “did I know the value of my little fortune till this period : I could now almost count it with the ecstasy of a miser ; and in my mind divide it into fancy shares, for each of our little community. An independence, however small, is a blessing. Although it will not procure us the luxuries of life, still in health it will preserve us from wants, and in sickness nourish us with comforts.”

They retired at an early hour. The window in Orlando’s chamber looked towards the place where the treasure was buried. He watched the approach of midnight with considerable expectation. It was dark and gloomy ; yet he perceived the figure of Otto glide towards the spot. He saw him after some time return loaded with the contents

of the chest, which he had placed in a box he carried for the purpose. Orlando was now satisfied, and retired to his bed. About five o'clock Otto knocked at his door, and brought him fifty of the pistoles from the treasure, which he had deposited in the place they had fixed upon.

He informed his master he had managed to replace the earth from whence he had taken it in the garden, so that there was no probability of discovery.

Orlando commended him for his ingenuity, and desired he would directly make ready for their journey.

His host had prepared breakfast at an early hour, and Orlando now offered to make him a pecuniary recompense for the trouble and expense he had occasioned, by a very liberal present from the store of which he had plundered him.

Don Francis, however, positively refused it. He declared every obligation was cancelled by the pleasure he had derived from his company; and requested some address by which he might perhaps hereafter be enabled to renew such a gratification.

Orlando, on his arrival at the cottage, resumed his real name, as the circumstances under which he quitted the inn made it necessary he should abandon the fictitious one he had taken; but he had determined not to mention in what family he resided at Madrid, the castle of Olvernardo being so well known through the province, that a confession of his being an inhabitant would most likely have tended to various questions he greatly wished to avoid.

For these reasons he had casually and slightly informed Don Francis, that, by the desire of his uncle, he had remained some time in the city, and was now continuing his tour for amusement and improvement. He observed, that as his next place of destination was at present actually unknown to him, he would do himself the happiness to write, and give him information of his route. His host returned him thanks for his civility, and declared he should be highly pleased with his correspondence. These points being settled, Orlando, after making the old woman a considerable present, took leave of Don Francis, and, mounting his horse, departed with Otto from the reclused cottage.

They soon arrived at the place where the money was deposited. It was some distance from the road, in a thick copse, the foliage of which totally screened them from observation, even if a traveller had by chance passed that way. Orlando, after loading himself and Otto with the contents of the box, ordered the latter to bury it some distance in the earth by means of a spade which had been left for that purpose overnight. They then proceeded on their journey—while Orlando reflected in what manner he should pursue his future conduct. On his arrival at Murcia he was aware it would be necessary for him to place in some secure situation the property he possessed, that—supposing the worst—should he be suspected or accused of the robbery, no large sums might be found in his possession. Various were his schemes for obviating this difficulty; various were the plans he proposed in his own mind, and as quickly rejected. The most easy method was to open an account with a banker: but there were some objections even to this scheme; for, as a stranger, it might lay him open to curiosity. At length he determined, however,

to dispose of a part in this way, and retain the remainder for his immediate expenses. Immediately on recovering from his late indisposition he wrote to his uncle at Andalusia, and, after slightly mentioning his illness, and the place where he then was, informed him it was his intent to proceed to a seaport, where he should in all probability remain some time. In this epistle, he most artfully evaded giving any particular reasons for leaving the castle of Olvernardo, more than his inclination to see other parts; while the whole of the letter was made up of such protestations of gratitude, duty, and affection to Don Diego, that he had no doubt of its counteracting any little reports he might have heard to his prejudice.

Orlando, however, with all his successful plans, had not forgotten the interview with his father. That strange event still dwelled upon his mind; and the remembrance of the dreadful act he had nearly committed even yet made him tremble with horror. His curiosity to know what had become of Don Alphonso since the night he quitted the inn, occasioned him many anxious moments. He

conjectured it was most probable he had by this time reached the castle of Olvernardo, and embraced his bother; while *he* was an outcast and a wanderer, who must never more appear in his presence, for fear of being recognised as his attempted assassin. The very thought of his seeing Osmund gave him the greatest cause for apprehensions on that head, as it was most likely their great resemblance to each other would lead to the detection he so greatly dreaded. It was true he had made up his mind to abandon his family connexions; but he did not wish to lose any advantage he might gain by retaining some kind of correspondence with them. It was those considerations which urged him to write to his uncle; and it was such views which likewise prompted him to act in the same manner towards the marquis and his brother. He wrote to each of them at the end of his first day's journey from the cottage, and mentioned his indisposition in a similar manner to that in which he had made it known to Don Diego. He desired their answers might be directed to the post-house at Murcia.

He had just concluded these letters, when a genteel young man and woman entered the inn for the night. He soon found it was the son of his late host, with his family, who had landed a few days before at Carthage, and were proceeding to the cottage of the recluse.

Orlando anticipated the disappointment they were destined to receive, perhaps with some emotion ; but when he considered his secure possession of the property, and the various gratifications he could purchase with it, his regret vanished ; his soul become callous to any pity for the unfortunate sufferers by his perfidy ; and, wrapped up in his own selfish and interested views, he stifled every feeling of humanity which had formerly glowed in his bosom.

In the course of a few days they reached the city of Murcia.

Orlando put up at the most capital inn ; where he had not remained many hours before he hired handsome apartments in one of the principal squares. In the course of the second and third days he purchased a very handsome carriage and mules, hired three male domestics, whom he put

under Otto's directions, and immediately placed the chief part of his money in the hands of two different bankers. He soon found he had little occasion for precautions against discovery of his theft. A newspaper informed him that his late host, a few hours before the arrival of his son, had died suddenly under very violent emotions, which were supposed to have been occasioned by having missed his treasure.

His old domestic survived him but a short time. She was supported by public charity; the greatest donation to which was given by Orlando, whose name appeared at the head of the humane list, with the sum which he had given marked in ostentatious capitals.

So generous a stranger, whose rank seemed of no common stamp, was immediately admitted into the first parties. He made no secret of his name and family. He gave elegant and expensive entertainments. His house became a public resort for fashion and nobility. His taste was the criterion of the city; his munificence and morality the constant theme both of the elevated and vulgar. These encomiums, however, were acquired

more from acts than manners. Orlando was still the bashful, diffident man. Although a part had worn off since his introduction to the world, he still retained enough to make himself uncomfortable, and to let the world know that he was so.

Otto received a thousand pistoles as his share of the booty, and was now admitted to the entire confidence of his master.

But Otto knew too much to be regarded otherwise than for motives of interest. Orlando secretly looked upon him with distaste and horror: at times his very heart yearned at the sight of him, and he shuddered at the recollection that he was in his power.

He was punctual to his appointment with father Theodosius under the porch of the cathedral. To his great relief the priest, who appeared in the usual way, laid no new demands upon him, and only required that he should not for the present move from the city. Orlando readily acquiesced to so slight a request, and ventured to inquire concerning his father. The displeasure of the monk instantly arose at the name, and he suddenly disappeared under considerable anger.

Orlando soon contrived secretly to gratify every inordinate appetite he possessed, without injuring his public character : he seemed to have arrived at the very height of the happiness for which he had languished. He was considered as one of the best men in the world, while he possessed every enjoyment which could be purchased by being a bad one.

CHAP. XX.

How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

SHAKSPEARE.

IT will now be necessary to give some account of the inhabitants of Olvernardo since the departure of Orlando from the castle.

The surprise of both the marquis and Osmund, upon the receipt of their several letters on that morning, was, perhaps, not so great as might have been expected. Orlando had of late entirely detached himself from every part of the family. That he should have been invited to spend some days with a friend was by no means improbable, and that he should not have thought it necessary to let them know it before (according to his usual behaviour), was a matter of little astonishment. Osmund received the miniature with peculiar satisfaction, as he could with pro-

priety keep his appointment with Leonora ; but he determined to fulfil his promise, by making Albert acquainted with their interview. For this purpose, he requested his company in his chamber before he descended to breakfast ; and having openly related the whole of his conversation with Donna Leonora at the masquerade, and slightly mentioned the circumstances by means of which he had before seen her, he requested Albert would freely satisfy him, as a friend, with respect to his intentions concerning this fair incognita. Albert was embarrassed ; the oath which had been drawn from him by his father prevented him from being explicit on the subject. He, however, answered enough to relieve Osmund from all inquietude : he declared he could never love any other but Cassandra ; and that, however certain events had forced him for a short time to contradict this assertion by his actions, yet to him he could not deny his feelings, nor dissimulate upon a point which now appeared so materially to concern them both. Osmund returned him thanks for his candour. They were interrupted from further conversation

by a summons from the marchioness for her son to attend her in her dressing-room. He immediately repaired to his mother, who informed him of the intelligence she had just received from her waiting-woman, of Cassandra's being found under an alarming state of indisposition in one of the deserted chambers.

Albert's astonishment was equal to that of his mother's. She had, however, resolved in her own mind that he was a principal concerned in the affair; and when the marchioness once formed an opinion, it was no easy task to convince her it was erroneous.

Albert declared most solemnly that he was totally unconscious of her having attended the masquerade; while his concern, which the information of her indisposition and the cause of it occasioned, was, according to his mother's mode of judging, a sure proof of his guilt. Her anger and reproaches increased. She anticipated the rage of the marquis, and dreaded the discovery which must be made to him of the particulars.

Albert, hurt at the false accusations which were brought against him, retired

abruptly, and immediately hurried to the house of Don Everard, where the answer to his inquiries concerning Cassandra confirmed the outline of the tale he had heard.

Distracted with the intelligence, he again returned to the castle, and mentioned the events to Osmund. Osmund advised him instantly to seek an interview with his father, before the intelligence was conveyed to him in any other way. Albert accordingly proceeded to his apartment, and informed him of the circumstances he had heard. His father appeared much chagrined at the account. He was aware of the resentment of Don Everard, whom it would be impossible to persuade but some perfidy had been exerted against his daughter. After reflecting for a few minutes, he suddenly demanded of Albert his acquiescence to marry Donna Leonora that morning, which would at once frustrate every obstacle that might hereafter arise.

Albert, equally surprised and distressed at the request, declared he could not accede to it. The marquis remonstrated with considerable choler, while the young man con-

tinued firm in his refusal, till his father ordered him from his presence, and desired that he should instantly quit the castle under his displeasure. Albert retired, and, again seeking Osmund, related to him the result of his interview. He determined to visit a friend who resided several miles from Madrid. He now declared that he had most resolutely given up all idea of submitting to the sacrifice which was demanded of him, and begged that Osmund would convey his sentiments on that point to Leonora, in as delicate a manner as possible: he also requested that he would write to him daily an account of Cassandra's health, and any circumstance which might occur at the castle in which he was interested. These matters being settled, he soon after took leave of his mother and sister, and hastily departed with his own servant from the city.

Osmund was punctual to his appointment on the terrace, and was gratified in an interview with Leonora. He presented to her the casket and its contents, and declared

himself most happy in the opportunity he had of restoring it.

“To a mind like yours, Donna Leonora,” he exclaimed, “those compliments which are in general poured forth at the shrine of superior beauty and fascinating manners must appear superficial, and unworthy of your regard. I can only offer my services to you in the plain simple language of my heart, and declare that your claim upon them will occasion me the highest gratification.”

Leonora, in her thanks—although she gave him no hopes that she should ever request his aid—still expressed herself with peculiar energy. Osmund had penetration enough to observe his offers were far from disagreeable. It was not in his nature to lose the favourable impressions he had made. He ventured to regret the secluded life which she led; to express some surprise at her disappearance from the solitary cottage, and at her nightly walk upon the terrace.

“Signior Don Osmund,” answered Leonora, “concurring circumstances, equally

strange and unexpected, have tended in part to elucidate some of the mysteries which surround me. You know I am the daughter of father Theodosius the monk. While the contents of the casket, and your discovery of my habitation in the solitary cottage, convinced you that I was unhappy, and produced those offers of services for which I am not ungrateful, your conduct demands that on certain points, where I am not denied the power, I should be ingenuous.

“ I am now an inhabitant of the east part of the castle. My father by some means was acquainted that our abode in the cottage was discovered. Early on the following evening after the death of Ursula, he had the chief of the furniture moved (to what part I know not); and immediately demanded that I should repair with him to the desolate chambers of Olvernardo.”

“ Good heavens !” exclaimed Osmund, “ can you thus submit to the cruel tyranny which appears to be imposed upon you? to be sequestered from the world; prohibited from all society; and surrounded by the

melancholy gloom which pervades this cheerless spot?"

"It is the commands of a parent," answered Leonora in a manner which indicated she felt some displeasure at his questioning her obedience to his will.

"Oh, Donna Leonora," exclaimed Osmund, "however I may admire your ready acquiescence to such demands as a principle of duty, I cannot but regret that they exist."

After some further conversation he informed her of the chief occurrences which had happened in the castle: of Cassandra's indisposition, the cause of it, and Albert's departure. In mentioning the last part of this information, Osmund watched the effects which it might have upon Leonora with a scrutinizing eye. He felt himself highly interested in the result of his observations; and he perceived, with infinite satisfaction, that her countenance, on receiving the intelligence, betrayed nothing which might be considered as marks of affection.

After an hour's uninterrupted conversa-

tion, Osmund took his leave, not, however, without gaining permission to see her again the following evening. In this interview he had found the manners of Leonora as elegant and accomplished as her person was beautiful. The delicacy of her sentiments on various points was delivered with peculiar grace and feeling, and confirmed her mind to have been highly cultivated.

Osmund soon discovered his admiration was superior to what he had ever felt for any other female. He endeavoured in vain to persuade himself to the contrary. He languished for their next meeting with an impatience he had never before experienced, and he anticipated various little events which might prevent it with unusual chagrin and uneasiness. He reflected with concern on the heavy charge he possessed against her father, while his astonishment increased when he considered the mysterious manner in which she was confined.

Theodosius was not of a stamp to be intimidated at the idea of discovering to the world he had not maintained the celibacy required for his clerical character. There

appeared a line of separation between him and other men, which seemed to put their opinions and approbation at defiance. He was perfectly indifferent either to the tenets or costume of the order to which he had belonged, and in which he had become a member by such extraordinary means. He stood alone as a being apparently independent of those customs which regulated the general laws of the society of his fellow creatures, and preserved the sociality of man. That he should wish his daughter to be allied to the heir of the house of Olvernardo was not, perhaps, so extraordinary a circumstance: but why the marquis should be equally strenuous for such an arrangement could not be accounted for.

The following day brought the most alarming accounts of Donna Cassandra de Gosmond. Her father returned in the fore part of it, and found his daughter in a most dangerous state of indisposition, and entirely delirious. In her ravings, she accused Albert d'Olvernardo of perfidy and cruelty; asserted it was by his appointment she visited the castle, and through his arts she had

entered the deserted chambers. At intervals she shrieked with horror, as if some dreadful spectre crossed her sight; and after the violent exertions which her delirium occasioned, she sunk into a state of fainting weakness which threatened immediate dissolution. The grief and rage of Don Everard drove him almost to distraction; he even threatened to procure an audience with his sovereign, and lay a personal charge against the marquis and his son for the injuries he had sustained.

The marquis so far descended from his dignity as to request an interview with him, that the circumstances between them might be adjusted and explained: but Don Everard would not hear of reconciliation, and would give no other answer than that the insult he had received should be revenged.

Albert's absence from Madrid appeared to strengthen the accusations that were publicly and generally brought against him. His father, although he saw the impropriety of it, would not consent to recall him, as no request of that kind had been made from the young man himself.

Under these circumstances several weeks elapsed. Cassandra's insanity still continued, and her physicians were at last induced to declare that they entertained but little hopes of her ever recovering her reason.

During this period Osmund had become a constant nightly attendant on the terrace. His interviews with Leonora were generally the result of them; and those interviews soon produced certain sentiments in each, which formed the basis of a mutual affection. In character, Leonora differed in many points from the generality of her sex. A short sketch of those incidents in her life which at different intervals she conveyed to Osmund will serve to confirm that she might characteristically be termed the child of misfortune.

Adversity had taught her fortitude. A mind like that of Leonora's, highly cultivated, was capable of gleaning instruction from her distresses, and reflecting with philosophic acuteness on those events which occasioned her misery.

Although not yet twenty, she had often been necessitated to think and act for herself.

She had not experienced the comfort of a tender maternal parent to regulate her ideas and guide her conduct. The powers of her mind had been called into action at an age when their exertions are seldom demanded ; and the gloomy prospect with which she was surrounded, although at intervals it depressed, yet inspired her with a courage and perseverance to endure those difficulties and discomfits it fell to her lot to encounter.

The strongest efforts of Leonora's recollection could only trace the faint remembrance of her early childhood, when she resided with a female companion of about her own age, whom she was taught to consider as her sister, and whose name was Lucretia, under the care of a woman past her meridian, called Ursula ; who instructed them in the first branches of education with a tenderness and assiduity which would have given every reason for the supposition that she was their mother, had she not taken considerable pains to impress the contrary on their minds. But Ursula, although she satisfied them on one point, left another, equally interesting, undetermined ; namely, who was their mo-

ther. On this subject she maintained a general silence ; and when youthful curiosity sometimes forced the question, they immediately received an equivocal answer, and were earnestly requested not to renew it.

They resided in a neat comfortable cottage a few miles from the city of Oviedo. At the age of twelve years they were first introduced to Theodosius de Zulvin. The sensations which Leonora experienced when she was informed he was her father, whom she had so long and anxiously expected to see, were never to be forgotten. In this interview she discovered Lucretia was but her foster-sister, and that in a few days they were to take leave of Ursula, and quit the cottage for ever. This information, added to the strange and terrific appearance of her parent, served to impress the meeting in such strong colouring on her imagination, that time had no power to obliterate it.

The most forcible conceptions of filial duty she had imbibed with peculiar strength from the laborious efforts of Ursula, and her continual instruction and admonitions on this point seemed to indicate she had or-

ders to exert them for particular purposes. They were ordered to prepare themselves for a journey of many miles, and were given to understand, that they were to be placed under the protection of the abbess of the convent of A——, on the borders of the province of Leon.

There appeared a considerable degree of mystery couched in the form of this arrangement; and the excessive grief of Ursula at parting with them seemed a prophetic warning that their happiness was at an end.

The manners of Theodosius were as eccentric as his appearance. He betrayed none of those symptoms of parental affection which might have been expected from one who beheld a daughter after a considerable absence, possessed of every requisite his fondest wish could have anticipated. To Lucretia he behaved with a coolness bordering on severity; and to their inquiries after some particulars of their family, he gave them a denial in words which made them tremble. They parted from Ursula with that regret which might be expected

from the affectionate care she bestowed upon them, and she appeared equally distressed at the separation.

They were accompanied by Theodosius the whole of their journey. His manners continued equally forbidding and gloomy. He seldom addressed them; and when their wondering admiration at various objects which they passed occasioned them to ask him some trifling and unimportant questions, they were rebuked by answers equally morose and unsatisfactory.

On their arrival at the convent of A——, at rather a late hour of the night, they were immediately introduced to the abbess. She seemed a woman of much dignity of manners. She was reading by a lamp at the further end of a very large apartment. On the approach of the priest and his companions she rose with surprise and agitation, and gazed on the countenance of Theodosius with considerable terror. He presented Leonora and Lucretia to her, with a few words respecting the manner of their treatment, which were delivered in too low a voice for them distinctly to hear what he uttered.

The abbess looked upon the girls with a pitying aspect. Theodosius appeared to lay great stress upon certain points of his conversation, and on his departure declared his intention of visiting them again in a short time.

In the abbess of the convent of A—— they found a truly valuable friend. Peculiar care was taken of their education. Persons whose abilities were of the first rank in every elegant accomplishment were provided to assist in their tuition, and the progress in their studies was beheld with astonishment. The tenderness of her manners at once served to place her in the maternal character under which they had considered their much-beloved Ursula. The awe which they first experienced at the dignity of her situation vanished by degrees in the affability and mildness of her manners, and they soon sought her company with anxious solicitude.

Theodosius was not punctual in his promise of visiting them. Six years elapsed, during which period he was not seen at the convent. Leonora and Lucretia, whose curiosity had increased with their age, made various inquiries concerning their family:

but the abbess, though indulgent on every other point, maintained the usual taciturnity they had experienced on this; and not only declared herself incapable of gratifying their curiosity, but confessed to them the mentioning of it occasioned her considerable uneasiness. It was about this time she received a letter from Theodosius, the contents of which served greatly to distress her. Leonora and Lucretia were summoned to attend her in her closet. They were no sooner alone, than, endeavouring to collect her utmost fortitude, she thus addressed them:—

“ I flatter myself, my dear children, you are aware of that affection I have felt for you since I have had the happiness to receive you under my care, and in some measure possessed the power to alleviate those discomfits which, from peculiar circumstances, you have unmeritedly experienced. The contents of this paper, which I have received from Theodosius de Zulvin, do, I confess, cause me infinite chagrin. It contains a request almost bordering upon compulsion—that Lucretia shall immediately receive the white veil.”

They had been so used to consider their destinies the same, and accede together to every arrangement which the priest planned, that they had no doubt but this likewise was intended for their mutual performance. The renouncing of the world appeared to them a sacrifice of no considerable magnitude, provided their separation was not the consequence. With the lady abbess they had by no means been considered as recluses. She received at times company of the highest rank, and her boarders were always of the party. They had not therefore been kept entirely from temptation to mix with general society.

Their amazement and grief were equally excited, when they heard the abbess quote the part of the epistle she spoke upon; which, after demanding that Lucretia should obey in making the convent her habitation for life, particularly required that Leonora would form no wishes to follow her example, but hold herself in readiness to quit it whenever it might suit her father to make such a demand.

The abbess attempted to comfort them, but her distress was nearly equal to their own. Lucretia declared she never could consent to become immured within those walls which did not contain her Leonora: that, as Theodosius was not her parent, she conceived herself under no ties of duty to render her whole life miserable by submitting to an arbitrary and cruel decree. The abbess had no sooner left them, than, falling on her knees before a figure of the Virgin, she most solemnly swore never to receive the veil but in company with Leonora.

Theodosius requested an answer to his letter. The abbess received Lucretia's refusal with reluctance. She desired her to consider the consequence of irritating Theodosius de Zulvin, and begged her not to put a negative upon his desire. Lucretia, however, whose secret oath overcame every argument urged by the abbess, continued firm in her determination; which was immediately conveyed to the priest. A few days brought him to the

convent. A private interview with the abbess was his first demand, and the most dreadful consequences the result of it. She was taken suddenly ill, and died in a few hours. Her senses failed her immediately her indisposition commenced; on which account neither Leonora nor Lucretia were permitted to see her. The priest did not leave the convent till after her dissolution: he said he should soon return, and commanded that Leonora and Lucretia should be then ready to quit it.

The loss of the lady abbess occasioned them the most poignant grief; while a confused report ran through the community, that, to all appearance, she had been poisoned. Leonora, who was sensible that a suspicion of that kind must ultimately fall upon her father, was almost distracted with apprehension and alarm.

Theodosius was punctual to his word in returning to the convent. He was made acquainted with the murmurs which had been circulated respecting the death of the abbess, and he discovered some few of the faction formed against him on that point, which were

chiefly composed of some of the members of a neighbouring order of monks. He instantly insisted on a meeting of their principals being convened, and that the facts should be impartially judged by them. Such a meeting was accordingly held; and no proofs being brought against him, the reports were declared to be false, and the propagators of them threatened with punishment.

The power and popularity of the monk appeared to increase after this event, and he was a principal instrument in raising a successor to the dignity of abbess, which was then waiting to be filled. No sooner had this woman entered on the functions of her holy office, than Lucretia was summoned to attend her, and the request of Theodosius respecting her taking the veil was again mentioned in a manner very different from that in which she had formerly received it. The demands of the priest she attempted to enforce in a peremptory manner by her own threats, and declared that violent measures must be the consequence of a refusal. Although terrified and distressed, Lucretia continued firm to her first resolve. The re-

collection of her oath urged her to be determined, and she most solemnly declared nothing should prevail upon her to break it. Theodosius himself in vain attempted to alter her resolution. The terror of his aspect and manners failed to intimidate or awe her into obedience ; and, after several private interviews with her, he left the convent in a rage.

From this time the treatment of the new abbess became a regular system of cruelty. It commenced by separating Leonora and her adopted sister. The former continued in her usual situation, but the latter was confined in one of the chambers which had belonged to her departed friend the late abbess. It was soon whispered, that in this chamber she discovered papers which elucidated some matters equally surprising and horrible. It is certain, that Lucretia was never more suffered to converse with Leonora, and that she was afterwards confined for some months in a remote cell.

During this period the monk visited the convent but once ; and it was then supposed he was sent for on the discovery which Lu-

cretia had made. He quitted it again, seemingly in much agitation, after a few hours conversation with the abbess, without speaking to any other person.

Leonora received two letters from him, one of which was that found in the casket by Osmund. The subject of them was to inform her that his reason for not suffering her to take the veil was his intention that she should marry, he already having plans arranged for that purpose.

One morning, at an early hour, she was suddenly informed her father was at the convent, and that it was his desire she would be ready to attend him in a few hours.

At the first moment of this information she was severely distressed at the idea of quitting it without Lucretia, but soon understood she was to accompany them.

Overjoyed with this information, she prepared for their departure with alacrity. In a short time she was summoned to the gates of the convent, and was there joined by her father, who handing her into a post-carriage, they departed with much expedition.

Leonora, after recovering from her sur-

prise and disappointment at not seeing Lucretia, ventured to inquire for her. She was answered with great severity by the priest, not to make herself uneasy upon her account ; that she followed them in another carriage. Leonora for some time supposed this assertion was made merely to satisfy her : but she afterwards found it was true ; for at the first inn where they stopped to change horses she gained a sight of her friend in a vehicle, which drove up soon after. She was prevented from running into her arms by her father, who forcibly drew her back, and declared, if she made another attempt of a similar nature, she would experience his most violent displeasure. Leonora was infinitely distressed. In the few moments she had beheld Lucretia she perceived her greatly altered ; her form appeared wasted with distress and sufferings.

Leonora once more asked her father when she might be permitted to embrace Lucretia. He answered with great reluctance ; but at last said, at the end of their journey. This reply again in some measure comforted and satisfied her. Theo-

dosius would not remain at any inn to sleep, and the refreshments which they took were in general brought to the carriage. On the evening of the third day's journey it began to grow dark about the time they entered a thick wood, the roads through which appeared extremely intricate. Leonora dared to hint her alarm of banditti, but was soon silenced by a rebuke from her father. In a short time the darkness of the night rendered the way difficult to discover; and the muleteer, who grumbled exceedingly at their not being accommodated with a guide, declared he drove entirely at random. Theodosius still persisted in going on, and seemed little disturbed at their situation. Leonora, who had listened for some time, could not hear the noise of the carriage behind. She mentioned this to her father; but he made light of her anxiety, and said, he supposed they were following at some distance. The muleteer likewise said he would wish to wait till the other carriage came up; but Theodosius would not hearken to the proposal. They again proceeded, but in less than an hour entirely lost their track, and the

driver declared it was impossible to go on any further till day-light. The priest appeared even then unwilling to stop ; but, as there was no alternative, he was necessitated to submit. Leonora now fully expected that the carriage behind would shortly overtake them ; but it did not arrive. She expressed her alarm for the fate of Lucretia. Theodosius bade her be silent, in extreme anger, and seemed neither concerned nor surprised that it had not joined them.

At day-break they found they were but a little distance from the road they should have taken ; but the other carriage was not within either the call or whistle of their driver. Theodosius now observed, that he supposed they had mistaken their path, and got into some of the intricacies of the wood—but that no danger could be apprehended for Lucretia, who was guarded by an out-rider. The ill looks of this man Leonora had noticed when they first commenced their journey.

They travelled slowly along the skirts of the wood for some hours. The road was extremely private. They passed but one poor house of public entertainment. Hay-

ing halted for refreshments, Theodosius remained some time, under expectation (as he said) of Lucretia's meeting them at this place. No one, however, appeared; and Leonora was inconsolable. They again entered the carriage, and towards the close of the evening arrived at the solitary inn already described. The priest declared he was determined to wait there till he heard some news of their companion. Such a resolution gave Leonora considerable satisfaction; and she heard him give directions to the landlord for sending out some of his people to gain information. She arose at a very early hour the next morning to attend her father, who was ready to depart. Her first inquiry was, on descending from her chamber, if they had heard any thing of her friend. She perceived that the countenance of the landlord was overshadowed with either a real or pretended concern, and that her father was in some measure ruffled. She immediately conjectured fatal intelligence had been received of Lucretia; and she anticipated rightly. She was informed that Basil, the out-rider, had returned at a

late hour on the last night, and brought intelligence of Lucretia being murdered ; that, owing to the darkness of the evening, they had mistaken their road, and found they were not following the other carriage. In this dilemma they were at a loss in what manner to act, and were shortly overtaken by five men, whose appearance confirmed them to be banditti. Basil was necessitated to surrender, and the robbers had the fullest expectation of a very large booty. Their disappointment in this respect added to their natural brutal ferocity. They began to insult Lucretia with the most dreadful freedoms, while Basil was tied hand and foot to a tree. Lucretia, in her struggle with them, suddenly pulled a pistol from one of their belts, and wounded him who appeared to be their chief. Enraged at this act, one who stood near gave her a violent blow on the neck with the hilt of his sword, which struck her to the ground, and the other instantly stabbed her to the heart. In their confusion, they totally forgot Basil, the carriage, and mules, and directly made off with the wounded and the body of the deceased.

Leonora listened to this tale with all the horror that might have been expected. Her grief for the loss of Lucretia was the most poignant. She had been the companion and sister of her earliest years: their separation, and the sufferings of the former for the last few months, served, if possible, to increase her affection: her anxiety for her welfare, and apprehensions for her situation, had occasioned her the most severe distress: and she beheld the dawn of each new day with no other pleasure, but the hope that it might, by some chance or other, restore her to her friend.

After her agony had in some degree abated, she asked what became of the muleteer who drove them, and was answered, that he fled on the first appearance of the robbers.

Leonora was hurried into the carriage, which waited for them, by her father, with much resentment. His anger seemed to be occasioned at the concern she expressed for the accident (as he coldly termed it) which had happened. Basil appeared on horseback behind them. He seemed no ways con-

cerned. Leonora shuddered at his ferocious looks, and could not help doubting the protection which the unfortunate Lucretia had received from him.

They proceeded with increased speed the remainder of their journey. No material circumstance occurred before the conclusion of it; when the carriage stopped at a late hour of the night, near the end of a bye and solitary lane in the suburbs of Madrid. Here they alighted; and Theodosius conducted his daughter, by an unfrequented path, to that cottage in which, as has already been related, Osmund discovered her.

To her surprise and joy Ursula opened the door. Leonora flew into her arms. The old woman was equally gratified and affected.

The priest left them in a short time.

Leonora related to her, in an agony of grief, the loss of her friend. Ursula elevated her eyes toward heaven; her hands were clasped together; and she sunk almost senseless into a chair which stood near her. Leonora was called from her own sorrows to relieve Ursula from the situation in which the information had thrown her. She bathed

her temples with water, and used every exertion to recover her. It was a considerable time, however, before they had the desired effect. Leonora attempted to give her comfort ; but the words died upon her lips, and she could only weep at the recollection of the subject which required it. She inquired of Ursula how she had fared since they had been parted. The old woman informed her, she had resided in her cottage, as formerly, till within the last six months, when she was one day called upon by Theodosius to remove to the suburbs of Madrid. The idea of so long a journey in some measure alarmed her, and she begged to remain and die on the spot where she then was. But the father would be obeyed ; and, to incite her to the task, told her, it was not improbable but she might be visited by Leonora and Lucretia. This was indeed a spur to Ursula : she undertook the journey with pleasure, and arrived without any accident at her present dwelling, where every thing was prepared for her reception. Leonora informed her in her turn of the events which had happened to herself and Lucretia during their residence

in the convent of A——, and related the circumstances of their fatal journey, in which she had lost her adopted sister.

Ursula listened to her narrative with grief and horror, and embraced her remaining charge with, if possible, more than usual warmth, under the distressing idea that her tenderness could not now be divided.

They resided together uninterrupted for some months, the priest occasionally visiting them about once a fortnight: he then said but little, and remained only a short time. He, however, in these interviews, more than once hinted he should shortly call upon Leonora to marry; which event would immediately take her from the reclused life she had hitherto led, and place her in society of a high and eminent rank. Leonora received this information not only with indifference but distaste; while Ursula, whose health had rapidly declined for some time, still lectured her on obedience to the will of her father.

Leonora listened perhaps to her advice with more attention, from the idea that she should not long receive the benefit of it. Ursula's constitution seemed entirely decay-

ed; and Leonora observed, with the most heartfelt concern, that her indisposition had greatly increased since the shock she had experienced from the information of Lucretia's death.

In one of her father's visits, she requested he would send medical assistance.

Ursula was extremely averse to this proposal, and the priest appeared by no means to press it. The evening before the night on which she died she suddenly became much worse, and it was easy to perceive her dissolution was near. Theodosius visited them at a late hour. He was well convinced of Ursula's situation, but he would not listen to any advice being procured.

The reader is acquainted with the further particulars of her death, in a description of Osmund's visit to the cottage at that critical period.

The next morning the monk arrived at an early hour, and commanded Leonora, in a severe tone, to be ready to attend him as soon as it was dark in the evening.

Her situation may well be conceived. Every exertion of her fortitude was necessary to support her under the discomforts of

her situation. There was not a being in the world to whom she could look for consolation. The presence of her father occasioned her only anxiety and terror: it seemed his study to impress himself on her mind with awe and affright, to be obeyed with fear, and looked upon with disgust.

In the middle of the day, two ill-looking men arrived; one of whom she soon discovered to be the same that attended Lucretia at the time she was murdered. They said they had orders from the monk to move every article of furniture the cottage contained, and they had a small waggon for that purpose. They returned again at the close of the day, and the priest arrived at the same time. He told Leonora she need not make herself uneasy at leaving the body of the deceased, as he would take care it should have interment with its due rites.

There was no alternative: Leonora acquiesced, and followed him in silent agony. She was scarcely able to walk, and supported herself on the offered arm of her father.

After some time they arrived without notice at the eastern parts of Olvernardo. Leonora was alarmed at the gloom which

surrounded her: her father encouraged her with assurances of perfect safety, but they were delivered with severity and ill humour.

They entered by the way Osmund discovered, but did not take the same route.

After traversing a few gloomy chambers, they arrived at one, at the end of a long passage, which was completely furnished with every necessary of life. A small door in one part led to another room, in which was placed a neat bed.

“These apartments,” said the priest, “must be your abode for a short time: you shall not be without a companion: to-morrow I will bring you a young girl, whom I have procured to attend upon you. Be not discomfited at the idea of this situation; in a very short period it shall be altered to one the most enviable: riches, rank, and power, with every attribute that confers happiness on the human mind, shall be yours. You will then remember with gratitude that you possess a father who has ever studied your interest with the most assiduous care.”

These words had but little effect in alleviating the grief and terrors of Leonora. She ventured to confess she dreaded to remain in

that place alone. The priest, however, paid little attention to her complaints, and, after some general admonitions, left her in the midst of her distress.

She passed a sleepless night, and observed the first rays of day dart through the casements of her chamber with the most heart-felt joy.

She soon discovered the lattices of her apartment opened to a return part of the terrace, which continued round the eastern wings of Olvernardo, and was entirely surrounded with thick shrubs, which spread to a considerable distance. On this place her father had given her leave to walk; but she had orders not to pass beyond the return, which was not only more clear from trees, but exposed to observation from the inhabited parts of the castle.

It was in one of these rambles, when she trespassed upon the bounds prescribed, that Osmund first noticed her, through the information of Cecil.

Theodosius was punctual to his appointment the following morning. He brought a young girl about fifteen, of a very pleasing

appearance, to attend upon her. He remained but a short time. She understood from Nanette, that she was an orphan, having lately lost her parents from the ravages of a malignant fever; that the monk had sent for her from Uzeda, near which town they had resided; that soon after her parents were buried, he had by chance called at the cottage of a distant relation, who had taken charge of her; and it had been settled between them, that when the priest wrote for her she should be immediately sent off according to the direction he had left. This was accordingly done; and she arrived on the preceding night at an inn in the suburbs of the city, where she was met by Theodosius, who ordered that she should remain there that night, and be ready to go with him the next morning at an early hour. He arrived at the time he mentioned, and conducted her the same way he had taken Leonora to the eastern rooms.

The unaffected simplicity of this girl's person and manners was irresistibly prepossessive. Leonora soon found in her a pleasing and affectionate companion. She

beguiled the tedious hours she was doomed to spend in the melancholy abode, with every exertion she was capable of to sooth and comfort. The priest in a short time informed her the period was arrived in which the plans for the change of her situation would commence. He told her of the preparations making for the masquerade which was to be given by the marquis, and which he hinted was arranged purposely for her introduction. He acquainted her it was with the heir of Olvernardo to whom it was his intention she should be allied. He brought her a dress for the occasion, and gave her particular instructions with respect to the interview.

Leonora listened to him with passive obedience: but her soul recoiled at the idea of being bartered for under the views and inclinations of another: yet she had ever been taught to consider her father with that awe and terror which for a time precluded direct disobedience to his will.

The person of Osmund, and the delicate manner in which he offered his services on the distressing night of Ursula's dissolution.

had made a strong impression on her mind. She wished (and she could not account for the cause of it) that he had been the youth to whom her father was going to introduce her. He was the only person she had seen, except the monk and a few rustics, since she had quitted the convent of A——; and his figure and manners had, from that period, been continually present to her imagination.

She was to recognise Albert by her mother's picture, which he was to present to her. The result of this interview, and the various consequences which the masquerade produced, have already been related. Leonora was conducted back to her apartments by her father, and did not see him for some days after.

In the interval she had an interview with Osmund on the terrace. Informed of the affairs which were going forward in the castle, she found that Albert loved another, and she discovered she derived happiness from the information.

In the next visit she received from her father, he mentioned she would be necessitated to remain in her present state some

little time longer, as the plans he had formed were in some measure impeded.

Osmund became no longer indifferent to her. The imaginations of both were warm and romantic. Vows of love and fidelity were mutually exchanged, and the confidence which such a connexion produces followed as usual. Each, however, knew more than they had hitherto disclosed. Osmund could not reveal to her his possession of the fatal paper which aimed at the life of her father; and there was every reason to suppose by the contents of it, which called upon Leonora as a witness against him on the charge of Lucretia's murder, that she had in her narrative (even from Osmund) concealed some circumstances which would serve to impeach her own parent as an accomplice in the dreadful tale she had related.

In whatever terrific light she had been used to behold him; however she shuddered at his name, or trembled in his presence, Leonora still considered he was her parent. To have stood at the tribunal of justice a principal evidence against one whose life must have been the forfeiture for those crimes

with which she charged him, would have been a trial dreadfully severe for Leonora, even if the culprit had had no claims upon her pity, either from ties of blood or personal intimacy ; but to behold her father in such a situation, condemned to die from the very words which her lips might utter, was too horrid for her to support even in idea.

Their interviews were held with the utmost fear and caution. Although they had not yet been discovered by the monk, there was every reason to apprehend they would not long remain a secret from him.

CHAP. XXI.

What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus?

This torture should be roar'd in dismal hell.

SHAKSPEARE.

SOME weeks now elapsed, in the course of which signior Zadok Bellzenip received a letter from Don Diego de Mellas.

This epistle was in part an answer to one he had written, containing the information of Orlando's sudden departure from the castle. Don Diego mentioned having had one from the young man himself, with which he was perfectly satisfied.

He observed, that he intended to increase his income, and remit it as usual to Madrid.

With the behaviour of the tutor he likewise expressed himself much pleased, and concluded by saying, that, as he flattered himself Orlando was now capable of keeping a wary eye upon his own conduct, he had only to return him thanks for his assis-

tance in introducing him into life, and to beg his acceptance of an enclosed draft for five hundred pistoles, as a small recompense for his services.

Signior Zadok, however he might admire the generosity of the donor of this present, derived no pleasure in the receipt of it. He was aware how greatly Don Diego was deceived in anticipating the good effects of his system of education; he well knew the poignant sensations he would experience in a disappointment of them; and he at times considered himself as blameable in allowing him to remain under an error. But the idea of alarming him on so delicate a point, when there was a chance that Orlando might reform, and make most ample amends for his past conduct, was the reason which deterred him from the communication, and which, by the letter he now received from Don Diego, he had hopes were in some measure confirmed.

Signior Zadok could not prevail upon himself to accept the five hundred pistoles so liberally bestowed by his patron; and after much consideration he again enclosed

it in a letter to Don Diego, with many thanks for his goodness, and various apologies for returning it.

With Osmund he now considered his station as a sinecure, and in another letter to Don John declared himself entirely useless in the situation with which he had honoured him; that he had understood it was at first his intention Don Osmund should proceed in his route through France and England, under which arrangement he might possibly have been of some service; but, as those plans seemed for the present laid aside, he could not consider himself as justified in any longer intruding on his generosity.

Don John, in reply to this epistle, most politely declared he should account himself obliged if signior Zadok would remain with his pupil some little time longer. He confessed his own wishes had prompted him to hope his nephew would himself have expressed a desire to see other countries, and that he had intended his visit to Madrid as merely a first introduction to the world. Osmund, however, far from

shewing such a desire, had lately by his letters rather intimated a distaste to it; and Don John was not of a disposition to bias his inclination, even by strongly expressing his own wishes on the subject. Signior Zadok of course readily acquiesced with the request, and was informed that Don Diego had settled the five hundred pistoles he returned upon his parents.

His feelings on the information of this generous act may well be conceived: he immediately dispatched a billet expressing the effusions of them to Don Diego.

Signior Zadok now felt a heavy pressure taken from his heart. His constitution was naturally weak, sickly, and delicate. He had ever considered it as by no means improbable but his parents might survive him: the idea was agony to his soul. It presented them indigent, forsaken, and unprotected. While *he* had power to procure them the necessaries of life, he valued their existence above all earthly blessings: when that power failed, he could not but utter a melancholy prayer, that he might be permitted to follow them to the grave.

Zadok was a man of strong understanding. The infirmities of his body were a strange contrast to the vigorous conceptions of his mind. The indecent ridicule upon his person, which often reached his ears from the heedless exclamations of the unfeeling and the vulgar, although at times they stung him, never forced from him a vindictive reply; and when his casual advances to sociality at public places led him to address his unknown companion on some general topic of conversation, he often received a chilling answer of reserve, while his deformed figure was surveyed with evident marks of aversion and contempt. It was curious to observe how those obstacles at times gradually vanished, by the power of that peculiar art which signior Zadok had acquired of making himself agreeable. It sometimes happened, that the person addressed so far overcame his prejudice as to answer him by a slight remark, which good manners demanded he should return. The assertion, let it be what it might, instantly received an acquiescence, with additional proofs of its accuracy. The effects were instantaneous:

he no longer wanted a companion ; he was a sensible *little gentleman*, and not quite so deformed as he at first appeared. He had a tolerably good face, if it was not quite so pale ; and although his hump would perhaps have been better out of the way, yet it did not disfigure him as it would have done many others. His hump, however, and every untasty thing about him, was by degrees forgotten ; and he always concluded his conquests by securing the epithet of one of the most entertaining little men in the city of Madrid. Nay, a certain lady of high rank was heard to declare, she should not be surprised if a prominence between the shoulders was to become fashionable, out of compliment to signior Zadok ; and a friend, to whom she had conveyed the hint, had it in contemplation to lead it off in a short time, by adopting one himself, and calling it the Zadokian rise.

The correspondence between Albert and Osmund continued without interruption. The former congratulated his friend on the good opinion in which he appeared to stand with the fair Leonora. Every epistle con-

tained inquiries concerning Cassandra, and Osmund satisfied him as far as he was able. His information, however, on that subject was confined. Don Everard suffered but few visitors to approach her; and those few he selected were such as had no intimacy with the marquis of Olvernardo, or any of his family.

Cassandra had considerably recovered, but her melancholy still continued. Confirmed in the idea that it was Albert by whose cruel conduct she had suffered so much, she could not but reflect with poignant regret that she yet loved him. She carefully concealed within her own bosom the particulars of the interview by which she had been so greatly imposed upon; or otherwise the relation of the picture having been delivered to her, would, in all probability, have elucidated the mystery of the event, and at once have cleared Albert of those suspicions which now so strongly rested upon him, by a full discovery of Orlando's guilt.

Fortitude was not a distinguishing feature in Cassandra's character. Unused to disap-

pointment or sufferings of any description, she was but ill calculated to bear the sudden shock she had received : her delicate frame appeared slowly to droop under its ravages, and the exertions of her mind were insufficient to withstand those reflexions which daily tormented her. Her intervals of insanity were not entirely removed ; and change of air and scenes were advised as the most probable means of her recovery. Don Everard had distant relations who resided at Murcia. He resolved to visit them, accompanied by his daughter, whom he could there introduce into company and amusements with more satisfaction than at Madrid.

The family of Olvernardo had made every exertion to discover the masque who had occasioned the catastrophe on the night of the entertainment at the castle : but their attempts were fruitless ; while Don Everard remained fully convinced that Albert was the author and executor of the plot.

The interviews between Leonora and Osmund still continued uninterrupted. Osmund had more than once endeavoured to

persuade her to fly with him from her gloomy solitude, and become his by those ties which would defy the world to separate them. Leonora, however, would not listen to his arguments on this subject. Implicit obedience to the will of the monk had acted as a spell upon her actions from the earliest state of infancy to the present hour: cruel as his injunctions had sometimes been, even a thought of not obeying them never entered her mind: he had worked upon her feelings under a system of terror, which at once rendered his tyranny absolute and powerful. Those by whom she had been instructed took every method to create a passive consent to the demands of Theodosius. His actions had generally inspired her with awe, and often with horror. It would be a fastidious mockery of the human passions to assert that Leonora was bound to the priest by those affections she would have experienced towards a tender indulgent parent, upon whom she could have gazed without terror, and have conversed without restraint. At the same time it is but justice to declare that she was sensible of those ties which the

name of parent demanded, and would have wished to have loved him with that fervor which such close links of consanguinity in general produce. There were moments when Theodosius in some measure lost a part of his usual ferocity. It was in these intervals she felt all those throbbing sensations of filial affection, which her father might so easily have cultivated, but which in the next moment he would freeze by his peculiar austerity.

As Osmund and Leonora were one evening slowly pacing the obscure part of the terrace, the latter observed the monk glide through the gloom at a distant part. He approached them by degrees. It was probable Osmund might have been able to escape unseen. But he did not wish to avail himself of the opportunity. It had been his intention for some time past openly to declare his views to Theodosius, and demand the hand of his lovely daughter.

The priest arrived at the spot where they stood. He started back at perceiving them; his features were distorted with rage; his whole frame shook with convulsive passion.

“Gracious God!” he exclaimed, “what is it I witness? Are my plans thus to be blasted by my own child? Are they to be frustrated by the interference of a romantic love-whining boy?”

Osmund felt the glow of anger burn on his cheek, while he supported the fainting form of Leonora on his arm. The monk rushed between them. He violently disengaged his daughter from Osmund; and giving her to the care of her young attendant (who had by this time arrived at the porch which opened to their apartment), she was led to her chamber. Osmund would have followed; but the monk placed himself before the entrance.

“Young man,” he cried in a voice of peculiar strength and hollow solemnity, “you are not aware with whom you contend. You trespass on the concerns of one whose power can hurl you to destruction.”

“Theodosius de Zulvin,” answered Osmund with a cool fortitude which at once surprised and disconcerted the priest, “I am not to be intimidated by a bombast pretence to more than the ordinary attributes

of your fellow-creatures. I am not to be blinded by superstitious terror, or deprived of my powers of reason by the crafty insinuations of a more crafty mind. I love, I adore your daughter; and I flatter myself Leonora has not received the declaration of my affection with indifference. Your consent is only wanting to make her mine by those ties which the laws and customs of our country so rigidly demand."

"Never," exclaimed the priest, while his whole frame appeared agitated by the anger which beamed in his countenance. He suddenly clasped his hands together with a frantic enthusiasm, and raised his bursting eyes towards a full and refulgent moon, which at that moment majestically appeared from a dark cloud that had for some time eclipsed its lustre. "By him," he continued, "who created that bright orb, which now pursues its course through his omnipotent power, I swear, most fervently swear, never to consent to such an union. Sooner, oh God! would I behold my child sink under the accumulated ills of every dire misfortune which thou hast inflicted on the human race.

Sooner would I see her body slowly consumed by the perpetual rays of a burning sun, and watch the last quivering breath of life play round her clay cold lips. Sooner would I see her pine away her existence in perpetual celibacy, or even deprive her with my own hand of a life of painful languishment, than I would behold that day which should make her yours."

"Monk," exclaimed Osmund, while he shuddered at his words, "cease thy impious profanations, nor appeal to that God whose avenging power might crush you, while your trembling breath is yet warm with the blasphemy you have uttered. But you are the father of my Leonora; you gave *her* being whom fate has ordained I should adore. That thought still draws me towards you with a magnetic power of attraction, and creates a wish that I may not consider you as my enemy."

"Sentimental fool," answered Theodosius, "dost thou suppose I am either to be softened or intimidated by the puny exertions of an insignificant boy?"

Osmund, whose warmth of temper at this

moment (occasioned by the taunting expressions of the monk) overcame his prudence, suddenly seized him by the arm.

“Theodosius,” he cried in a half whisper, “I am not to be insulted with impunity. My heart bleeds while I tell you that I have strong reasons to suspect you are a villain—a murderer!”

The pale moon-beams fell upon the features of the monk at this moment; they were convulsed with various emotions.

“Lucretia de Ravellina,” continued Osmund, “was destroyed by thy machinations.”

The monk heard no more: he struggled violently to release himself from the nervous grasp of his young accuser, and at the same moment he suddenly drew forth a dagger and aimed it at his heart. Osmund fortunately frustrated the intended blow, and wrested the instrument from his hand.

Leonora, having in some degree recovered, alarmed by the cries of her attendant, who had witnessed their struggle, now rushed between them, and fainted on the bosom of her father.

“Don Osmund,” he exclaimed, as he bore the lifeless form of Leonora to the internal part of the porch, “you will rue this hour. The moment will arrive when you shall repent our interview of to-night, and reflect on the consequences with horror. I am invulnerable to your power; and as a specimen of the superiority of mine own, mark these fatal words.”

At this moment the clock in the east turret of the castle struck twelve: the sounds appeared more than usually awful. The group on the terrace were highly interesting. Leonora was supported by her father and Nanette. Osmund, with the dagger still trembling in his hand, listened with an anxiety he could hardly have supposed himself capable of feeling for the prophetic information of the monk. He gazed on them alternately with tenderness and horror; while the dreary sounds which had interrupted the priest, during the time they were repeated, occasioned a death-like silence.

The face of Theodosius received the pale and uncertain light of the half-obscured

moon. His eyes moved with apparent mental agony: his body, which was bent forward, as if to approach nearer to the ear of Osmund, seemed writhed with excruciating tortures, and his uplifted hand clenched by the pangs he endured. The vibration of the last sound of the clock had scarcely died away, when, in an inward whisper, he thus addressed the distressed and astonished Osmund:—

“Those sounds are the death knell of your best friend. At this instant the bosom of your uncle Don John is pierced by the dagger of an assassin: at this moment the blood flows from his heart, and he expires on the dreary margin of a forsaken heath, without comfort or assistance.”

A smile of exultation played upon the face of the monk, while he observed the effect which these words had upon the astonished Osmund, whose eyes were riveted on his form and that of Leonora, till they were lost in the gloom of the interior part of the porch.

Whatever might have been his opinions of the supernatural powers of Theodosius,

it is certain he experienced extreme horror on hearing the assertion which he had uttered as a specimen of them.

He walked slowly from the terrace, and proceeded to the inhabited part of the castle ; where he had no sooner gained his own chamber, than he gave himself up to reflexions on the events of the night. He had as yet ever been free from the trammels of superstition : he was neither of an age nor disposition to be fettered by its shackles ; yet, under his present circumstances, he was conscious he felt those sensations which proved that he laid some stress on the horrid forebodings of the monk. Osmund could not divest himself of the melancholy imagery it had implanted on his mind. It was in vain he attempted to rally his spirits on the subject, and condemn his credulity for suffering a moment's uneasiness from so ridiculous a source. He was attached to his uncle Don John with that warmth which he might have been supposed to have felt for an affectionate and indulgent parent. The treatment which he had received from him demanded no less a return ; and no one could be more sensible

or grateful for those benefits which had been heaped upon him than Osmund. Leonora was not banished from his thoughts. He considered almost with distraction it was *her father* who had attempted to take his life ; it was *her father* against whom he had a charge of murder. To endeavour to bring Theodosius to justice was an act which both the moral and political laws of his country demanded ; yet to hazard sacrificing the parent of her whom he adored, was a dreadful, a horrible task to fulfil.

Under such torturing reflexions Osmund passed a sleepless morning. He met the family at breakfast ; but his altered manners foretold his anxiety and distressed state of mind. Their friendly exertions were useless to dissipate the gloom which overcast his countenance. He retired to his chamber soon after he had finished his meal, and wrote to Albert the intelligence that Cassandra was about to be removed from Madrid to Murcia.

This information he had contrived to acquire by the industry of Cecil, although the plan of her intended journey was kept as

secret as possible. Osmund waited for the evening with the utmost impatience, that he might hazard another interview with Leonora. He was not certain but the warmth of his conduct on the last night to her father might in some measure have incurred her displeasure. He knew not what arts the priest might have practised to withdraw her affections ; and he trembled at the recollection of the very great ascendancy which he appeared to have over her actions.

At the usual hour of their meeting he determined to brave the chance of again seeing the monk, and proceeded immediately to the terrace, from whence he entered the porch which led to her apartments. He found them entirely deserted. The chief part of the furniture was removed. Osmund was almost distracted : he blamed himself for not setting a watch upon the actions of the priest, who had not dined with them that day, and who, there was little doubt, had conveyed his daughter many leagues from Madrid. In what manner to trace their flight he was totally at a loss to discover ; nor were there any persons from whom he

could hope to derive the least information but the marquis, and from him there was little probability of success. In the first moments of his surprise and distress he resolved to demand an immediate interview with him; but a little reflexion soon convinced him such a mode of conduct would be equally abrupt and impolitic. He paced the terrace a considerable time with a hurried and disordered step. He called upon Leonora: at intervals he fancied he saw her meet him with her usual tenderness; while the ghastly form and prophetic whisper of the monk still weighed heavy upon his soul, and almost deluded him with a belief of a repetition of their horrors.

Having retired to his chamber, he began to consider what means would be most likely to trace the priest and his daughter; but there appeared none which held forth any probability of success, and he could only resolve upon setting Cecil to make as many inquiries as possible among the servants—although there was little chance of his deriving any information. He was dubious of conferring with the marquis on the subject:

the peculiar circumstances under which he appeared to stand with the monk apparently rendered the mention of his name unpleasant and distressing. For these reasons he determined to wait the event of Cecil's operations, to whom he gave immediate instructions.

Cecil had in part been in the confidence of his master during his late visits to the terrace; and although his loquacity among the servants of the castle might have rendered him a suspicious person for such a trust, yet he had never in any way betrayed it. His exertions, however, in questioning them about the monk proved fruitless; no one knew any thing more of him than either he or his master; namely, that he did not dine at the castle the day before.

Osmund's impatience and chagrin increased every hour. Cecil was again dispatched with an order to go round to the different roads which led from the city, and make slight inquiries, from persons who lived near, if Theodosius had lately been noticed to pass that way. He was too well known to escape observation even in the busy streets of the metropolis.

Cecil was again unsuccessful. All whom he addressed crossed themselves with great devotion, and returned thanks to the Holy Lady for not having seen the wizard monk for a considerable time.

The following day elapsed, and Osmund was still irresolute in what manner to act, when at a late hour of the night a loud knocking at the outer gates of the castle in some degree alarmed the inhabitants. Osmund had just finished a letter to Albert, and was delivering it to Cecil that it might be dispatched to him early in the morning, when the noise occasioned them considerable surprise and consternation. They heard a horse enter the court, and they could distinguish the voices of several of the servants of the castle, seemingly in much hurry and confusion. A few moments after Cecil's bell was rung violently from below, and he left his master to obey the summons with trembling expectation. Osmund felt an unusual dread of the information he might bring. He anticipated news from Seville; he recollected the words of the monk; he was ashamed to shudder at them, but he

could not avoid it. Cecil re-appeared with a ghastly countenance of grief and horror. He held in his extended trembling hand a letter. Osmund snatched it from him, and, with a palpitating heart, read the following contents:—

“ To Signior Don Osmund De Mellas.

“ Honoured Signior,

“ Excuse the liberty I take in addressing to you these few lines, with the dreadful information that our good master, your worthy uncle, is no more. He went out yesterday morning to dine with some friends a few miles from Seville; and on returning late at night over a desolate heath, he was cruelly murdered by a banditti who infest that neighbourhood. This horrid deed was discovered by some travelling merchants a little before twelve o’clock. Don John breathed his last a few moments after they came up to him, but he did not speak. The remains of our dear master were brought home by the merchants. I immediately sent off

for Don Diego de Mellas, and likewise conceived it necessary to dispatch a messenger for you, as your presence will, no doubt, be wanting on this melancholy occasion. I hope you will excuse the hurry of this epistle, and consider it as the consequence of my very severe distress.

“ I am, signior,

“ Your most respectful

“ and obedient servant

“ FABIAN.”

Osmund's emotions on perusing this letter were more severe than he had ever before experienced: he sunk senseless on a chair, and it was some time before the exertions of Cecil, and of several other servants who had assembled round, could recover him. The family were alarmed; and signior Zadok, among the rest, was acquainted with the death of his patron. This information occasioned him considerable distress. The very liberal behaviour of Don John, both to himself and parents, was deeply impressed upon his heart, and called forth that gratitude he was so very capable of feeling. His exertions were at the present

period called towards Osmund, who stood greatly in need of consolation on this melancholy event. The prediction of the monk appeared verified with the most minute exactness. Osmund trembled at the recollection of it.

“This man,” he suddenly exclaimed to himself, “must have been concerned in the assassination, by the very peculiar knowledge he had of the hour it was committed.” The idea almost drove him to madness: his mind was in that state of perturbation which annihilated all reflexion, and only presented the action of the moment as desirable, without any consideration of the consequences which might result from it. The suspicion that Theodosius was concerned in the murder of his beloved uncle precluded, for a time, the recollection that he was the father of Leonora: he thought only of bringing him to an ignominious punishment; and he suddenly demanded an immediate interview with the marquis.

The marquis, on receiving the intelligence which the messenger brought, readily agreed to Osmund’s request. Osmund was conducted

to his library. His appearance was wild and terrific. Grief was not the only passion marked in his countenance; horror was equally predominant. The marquis rose, and took his hand. "My young friend," said he, "I am most sincerely grieved at the melancholy, the dreadful news you have received."

Osmund raised his eyes, and fixed them upon the face of the marquis.

"Dreadful, my lord!" he exclaimed: "it is horrible. Are we alone, my lord?" His eyes wandered round the room in a manner which made the question useless. "Certainly," answered the marquis: "I surely should not have received you under these circumstances in company."

"My lord," continued Osmund with increased impetuosity, "I have reason for being secret: Theodosius de Zulvin, my lord, the monk of Madrid—"

The marquis started back with horror.

"What of him?" he exclaimed in a tone of much alarm.

"He is a murderer," cried Osmund.

The marquis's agitation appeared rather

to diminish than increase by this reply, and he resumed in some measure his usual coolness.

“Don Osmund,” said he, “let me prevail upon you to go to your chamber, and strive to compose yourself: the sudden news of this unfortunate affair has greatly affected you.”

“Sudden, my lord!” answered Osmund: “I was informed of it some days past: it was whispered in my ear at the very moment it was committed, by the prophetic tongue of Theodosius.”

The marquis, who was now still more convinced that Osmund’s brain was deranged, again entreated him to return to his apartment; while the little attention he paid to that part of the discourse which related to the monk served to increase his irritation and distress.

“My lord,” he continued, “you are not aware of the character of the man whom you thus cherish in the very bosom of your family. By heavens! he is a viper who will in some unguarded moment sting you to the soul. At the very hour which, according

to this letter, my uncle was assassinated, this monk, under apparent peculiar tortures of body and mind, actually informed me of the bloody deed. What is to be inferred from his conduct, my lord? Either that he possesses powers more than human, or that he is concerned with the desperadoes who deprived Don John of existence."

The firm and rational manner in which these words were delivered made the marquis suppose he was deceived with respect to Osmund's derangement of intellect. He requested he would more fully explain himself, by relating the circumstances which gave rise to the interview, in which the monk had delivered the fatal information he mentioned.

Osmund, under his present distress and alarm, was not aware that such a demand was most likely to follow the relation of his tale to the marquis; and he now perfectly foresaw that it must include an account of his nightly meetings with Leonora, or be so broken and unconnected that it would give reason to suppose he prevaricated, and was not perfectly clear in his charge,

The thought of Leonora almost made him repent the interview he had obtained, and the accusation he had already uttered. He was perhaps taking the most effectual means to bring to an ignominious death him who gave *her* being. Could he ever hope to call her his, when she would view in him the destroyer of her father, the accuser of his crimes, and the publisher of his disgrace? But Osmund was gone too far to retract. Of a disposition naturally open and candid, he resolved at once to confess to the marquis his love for Leonora, and relate to him the progress of their affections.

The marquis listened to him with attention. It was not difficult to perceive he was distressed at the recital; but on his mentioning the manuscript he had discovered, by means of the old woman in the solitary cottage, his agitation visibly increased; and when he uttered the name of Lucretia, the female whose murder it disclosed, his emotions overcame him, he fell back in his chair, and could only ex-

claim, in a faint and faltering voice, “My daughter—oh God! my daughter!” Osmund’s astonishment for a few moments prevented his attending to the situation of his auditor, who recovered soon enough to prevent him from ringing for assistance.

“Young man,” he exclaimed in a voice of much severity, “you have undesignedly drawn from me a secret which I would not have disclosed for worlds. Perhaps your possession of it may tend to destroy me: it may cover me with public infamy—it may blast my name for ever:—but mark me, signior,” he continued, while he suddenly seized the arm of Osmund with violence, “dare but to breathe it to any human being, either by direct information or oblique hints, and, by the firmament of heaven I swear, my whole power shall be exerted to crush you!”

“Unhand me, my lord,” cried Osmund with much firmness: “I am not to be intimidated by the magnitude of your power, or the threats of your oppression. Your high rank and station in Madrid, my lord,

may have given you certain degrees of superiority over the general class of your fellow-citizens, which neither justice can support, nor even the moral government of the world establish upon a firm basis. I must tell you, marquis, that the less this extension of prerogative is seen to be exerted, the more honour is reflected upon him who forfeits his arbitrary claim to it. *That man*, who would attempt to shackle the mind of another, by the aid of those actions through which he is capable of distressing him, deserves to feel the poignant sensations which one free born experiences when he is galled by the chain of tyranny, and discovers himself to be a slave."

The marquis seemed most sensibly to feel this rebuke. "Don Osmund," he exclaimed, "you have but little conception of my sufferings: you know not the tortures which agitate my soul."

He burst into tears as he uttered the last words. "Heaven forbid, my lord," answered Osmund, "that my conduct should for a moment add to your distress! I am sensible of the obligations which myself and

brother owe for the very noble and generous hospitality we have received ; and I here most fervently swear, never to reveal the assertion which I have just heard you utter."

"Many thanks to you," answered the marquis, recovering in some degree from his paroxysm of grief. "I sincerely beg your pardon. A few moments past I forgot myself. I have reflexions, signior, which at times drive me to madness. Father of Mercy," he exclaimed, "why am I thus suffered to drag on a miserable existence? Why am I daily permitted to view the rays of that sun, whose glorious splendor serves but to increase the horrors of my soul? Wilt thou not listen to my never-ceasing prayer, and shade me in the gloomy precincts of the grave? But I talk wildly: the grave may be hell to me. It is worse than hell, it is all uncertainty, it is horrible expectation.

"Oh, young man!" he continued, while he grasped Osmund's hand with violence, "if you knew how the fever of my brain consumed me, you would pity me. It would

even prompt you to wish that there was state of annihilation, that such a wretch as I might profit by it."

"Indeed, my lord," answered Osmund, "these are wild and incoherent words. I now repent that I have in part been the occasion of them. But this monk—this Theodosius de Zulvin——"

"Don Osmund," cried the marquis, "if I have any claim on your compassion, mention not that name again: 'tis a dagger which inflicts upon me the most excruciating tortures. Suppose him not accessory to the murder of your uncle because he informed you of it at the moment it was committed. Be not surprised at his actions, however different from those of other men. Avoid him as one whose very breath is poison—whose touch may blast you."

Osmund now changed the subject of their discourse by speaking of his journey to Seville, and that he intended to quit the castle in the course of a few hours.

"The circumstances which call you," said the marquis, "will not permit me to attempt to alter your resolution. I have

only to say, Don Osmund, that I hope you will ever consider the castle of Olvernardo as your home: the inhabitants, I am certain, will always be happy to recognise you with that title."

Osmund could scarcely speak: he clasped the offered hand of the marquis with fervor. "My lord," he cried, "your goodness is not lost upon me—I feel it; but my mind is at present in that state which precludes my returning you suitable thanks. The difference of our situations renders it improbable I should ever be able, by actions, to demonstrate to your lordship my gratitude for the favors we have received. I can only say, that in whatever state it is my destiny hereafter to be placed, I shall ever cherish them in my bosom, and consider the castle of Olvernardo as one of the brightest objects I can trace, in a retrospection of past scenes and past enjoyments."

Osmund retired to his chamber, and wrote farewell billets to the marchioness and Isabella, as he intended commencing his journey some hours before the time of their rising. Cecil was desired immedi-

ately to procure post horses ; and the servant, who brought the letter from Seville, was ordered to remain, to pack and follow with the luggage. In a very short time the carriage which was to convey him to Seville was announced ; and the disconsolate Osmund, accompanied by Zadok, after taking leave of several of the chief domestics (who were assembled in the court-yard for that purpose), threw himself into it, and quitted with considerable regret the gloomy towers of Olvernardo.

CHAP. XXII.

Had my resolves been wavering and doubtful,
 This would confirm them, make them fix'd as Fate;

THOMSON.

OSMUND de Mellas was buried in reflexions the chief part of the journey. They were complicated and confused: at intervals the tender remembrance of his deceased uncle called forth the most poignant sensations at the idea of his loss: he had ever looked up to him as a father, and considered him as the most affectionate of parents. Don John's general behaviour was such as to endear him to all with whom he had any concerns: his affability and pleasantry of manners rendered him a general favourite. But Osmund had far stronger ties to call forth his regard. To *him* he was indebted for the elevated rank he held in society; from *him* he received an education which at once enabled him either to support with propriety a superior station, or maintain a manly independence

under the frowns of adversity. Perhaps, by a general observer, he would have been considered as incapable of such reflexions: there was a vivacity, a volatility in his manners, which at once served to delineate his character to a stranger as a gay, dissipated, and thoughtless young man, who seldom troubled himself to think, and whose ideas, when he did, were hardly worth the time they took to collect them. Such traits, however, were by no means the characteristic of Osmund de Mellas: his mind was strong, vigorous, and penetrating. At times he exerted those qualities in their full force—not at particular periods, which made it necessary he should be seated alone in a dark room to court their influence—they visited him voluntarily, and on that account were the more vivid and powerful; insomuch that, perhaps, at the very moment his lips uttered a *jeu d'esprit*, his mind made the most penetrating remarks on the subject which called it forth.

The recollection of the monk still harassed and perplexed him. The words of the marquis relative to Theodosius were all

mystery: they might be applied to several opinions, and tended to excite various suspicions. Osmund had ever been the first to laugh at those tales of wonder which gave to an individual superior power and attributes to his fellow-mortals. He had always been taught to ridicule the idea, and openly to scoff at any attempts which might be made to impose upon his understanding by such ridiculous relations. The prediction of the monk, however, was a circumstance of no trifling consequence to stagger his belief on this point: the specimen of his power was a dreadful one—its effects the most awful and terrible. He was necessitated to suppose Theodosius either more than human, or one chiefly concerned in the murder of his uncle. If the latter supposition was confirmed, he was bound by the strongest ties to avenge the deed, and to act as a principal in causing him to be publicly sacrificed for the crime. This reflexion instantly brought to his mind the lovely figure of Leonora: he beheld her weeping for the unhappy fate of her only remaining parent, and fly from *him* with

horror, as the cause of his disgraceful death. In Leonora he discovered all that was aimable. Her misfortune served only to endear her to him. He was well aware that an alliance with her would not in general be considered as an act of prudence: her want of fortune, and still more her very near relationship to the monk, at once formed the most powerful objections, and his disregard of them would be considered as no proof of his abilities by the world. Osmund was not yet philosopher enough to look upon the opinions of what he called the world with contempt. There was a degradation in the idea of being pointed at by the multitude as one whose inferiority of understanding had made him public, which he could not very well brook: yet his love for Leonora would have overcome such obstacles, with whatever magnitude they might at first have appeared: but there was now another point open for reflexion, still more alarming:—her poverty and kindred to the monk were trifling impediments, when placed in competition with the thought that her father was the murderer of his

uncle. Osmund dwelled upon the idea with horror, and traced the consequences with agony. Signior Zadok, who was seated close up in the opposite corner of the carriage, observed his distress in silence. At intervals he attempted to give him some consolation on the death of Don John (for he was unacquainted with any other source which Osmund had for uneasiness); but the words faltered on his tongue, and the stifled tear which burst from his eye confirmed he was by no means competent to the task.

Signior Zadok, although he was a tutor, was no stoic. He well knew that most others in his profession would have strove to soothe the grief of their pupil, by the consolatory remembrance of the large fortune he was likely to inherit by the *unfortunate* event. But signior Zadok was not a tutor of modern fashion: he could neither lead his charge into those scenes which would empty his purse and ruin his constitution, nor congratulate him on the death of his best friend because it gave him possession of his estates. His feelings and opi-

nions were perhaps eccentric; by many they might have been considered as contemptible; but Zadok had acquired them in the school of adversity. In poverty and misfortune he had learned to cherish, and love those who gave him being; nor could he in affluence divest himself of the idea, that there were others in the world who felt similar sensations on those points with himself. He experienced the same impertinent curiosity during this journey as in the former one from Seville to Madrid. The eyes of the vulgar were fixed upon him at every place where he alighted from the carriage. The children were desired, by their more childish parents, to observe him with attention. Their satirical remarks upon his figure were by some uttered in his hearing, and their imitation of his gait mimicked before his eyes. Zadok observed them with coolness and unconcern; but the cheek of his pupil glowed with indignation at the illiberality of his countrymen.

Osmund, on his arrival at Seville, found his uncle Don Diego already there. As he entered the house of mourning his sensa-

tions were the most severe. It was not the affectation of grief, they were the genuine feelings of his soul. In one of his first questions he asked if the assassin had been discovered. He undertood that one of the banditti was apprehended on suspicion, and would be tried on the charge. Osmund conceived, that if the monk had been in any way privy to the deed, he should, in all probability, be able to discover it by this man, and he resolved to question him on that subject himself.

He found Don Diego was the executor of Don John's will, in which he (Osmund) was left the principal part of his fortune. The remainder was divided into various legacies of different magnitudes, and distributed in the most benevolent manner among those to whom they would be of essential service. Signior Zadok was not forgotten, his name was mentioned with a remembrance of five hundred pistoles.

Osmund received the most kind and friendly behaviour from his uncle Don Diego. He found his advice, with respect to the management of his new-acquired

fortune, extremely acceptable, while the old gentleman was equally pleased with his docility in receiving it.

The funeral of Don John, from his own request, was conducted without any pomp. His hearse was not adorned with the trophies or armorial bearings of his family dignity; but the recollection of his virtues was embalmed in the minds of those who knew him; and if their tears demonstrated their affection, such tributes were plentiful.

Signior Zadok had the felicity to clasp to his bosom his aged parents: the comforts of life had helped to restore, in some degree, their constitutions; and he beheld with ecstasy the declining years of their existence tinged with those warm rays of prosperity so necessary to their age and infirmities.

Don Diego conceived it necessary that Orlando should be immediately informed of Don John's death. He accordingly wrote to him at Murcia; as also did his brother, who gave him a pressing invitation to Seville. An answer from Orlando was very soon

received by each. He was most lavish in his expressions of sorrow for the loss of Don John, in both epistles. In that to Don Diego he expressed his hope that Osmund would make a good use of the wealth he possessed by the unfortunate event. He talked much of the immorality of young men in general, and sincerely prayed that his brother might prove an exception to the generality of them. He confessed his mode of living was better adapted to his taste in Murcia than at Madrid: the dissipation to which he was introduced in the castle of Olvernardo was *to him* totally disagreeable; he was not fitted for such a life. At Murcia he could follow his own wishes; observe and moralise upon the various busy scenes which passed his eyes, without becoming a performer in their follies. He was retired and unknown. He beheld the errors of mankind and pitied them, and he prayed that he might never become a copyist of their vices. Don Diego read this letter with rapture. He conceived his system of education was now proved to be successful; he reflected with peculiar

satisfaction on his management of the experiment, and the perfect confirmation of his hypothesis. Don Diego only wanted the idea, that the one pursued by his brother was false, to make him perfectly satisfied with himself. The letter of Orlando seemed obliquely to hint that Osmund was not free from juvenile indiscretions; and the peculiar melancholy which pervaded his features, although he had every reason to suppose it might originate from the loss of Don John, yet served, in the sanguine mind of Don Diego, to corroborate the insinuations of his adopted son. He immediately conjectured he was unhappy, because he might be under pecuniary embarrassments, which would perhaps take a great part of his fortune to discharge; or that he languished to return to the city of Madrid before the usual time which respect to the deceased demanded he should remain in Seville. In short, Don Diego conjured up various reasons for supposing what he wished to be convinced of, that his late brother's system of education had failed; which had not the least probable founda-

tion but in the wild conjectures of his own brain. At the same time it is but justice to observe, however averse he might be to the manner in which Osmund was educated, he did not possess those cruel prejudices which would have urged him to behave with any degree of resentment to the young man himself. No one laid greater stress upon his own opinions than Don Diego; but they never hurried him into a line of conduct that disgraced them. He was positive in his assertions, and maintained them with remarkable obstinacy; yet he entertained no malicious spleen against those who differed from him, or recollected their tenets (however they might disgust him), when he had it in his power to serve them. Orlando, in his answer to his brother's letter, returned him many thanks for his invitation to Seville, but positively declined it. His reasons were, his great partiality for the part where he then resided; and the causes for that partiality were explained in a similar way as in the one to his uncle.

Two months now elapsed, in the course

of which time Don Diego quitted Seville, after using every exertion to settle the affairs of Don John to the utmost advantage for his heir. In the course of this period, likewise, the trial of the assassin came forward. The charge being fully proved, he was condemned to die. Osmund requested an interview with him before his execution. He had confessed the deed, and appeared a sincere penitent. Osmund solemnly requested him to answer a single question, which should in no respect tend to criminate him farther on the crime for which he was to suffer, or any other he might have committed; at the same time declaring, that he would grant him any boon he should require, consistent with justice or humanity. The culprit listened to his offer with rapture, and, clasping his hands with ecstasy, elevated them towards heaven.

“I take you at your word, signior,” he exclaimed. “I have a wife and child. The former is on a bed of sickness, occasioned by the horrors of my situation; the latter is not yet old enough to maintain her mother

by the exertions of her labour. They are innocent. Promise me that you will preserve them from perishing for the common necessities of life, and I will answer any questions with that veracity which must be expected from one who has but a few days to live."

Osmund gladly accepted the proposition, and instantly demanded, if he had any knowledge of a man called Theodosius de Zulvin, a reputed monk of the order of St. Mark at Madrid, and well known in that city for a suspicion of his knowledge in witchcraft and magic. Osmund watched most carefully the countenance of the assassin; but he could not discover the least alteration in it, to make him suppose the man knew the person to whom he alluded. He said, he recollected to have heard of such a person, who was termed the monk of Madrid; but he most solemnly affirmed, that to his knowledge he never saw him, and was even ignorant of his name; nor was he ever connected with any person whom he had heard mention him, otherwise than as a public character.

Osmund's astonishment increased at this declaration. Theodosius seemed totally unimpeached with respect to being concerned in the murder; while his prophetic whisper at the moment it was committed gave every reason for believing the wild and uncommon reports which were circulated concerning him. Osmund left the culprit, and returned in a maze of doubt and perplexity. This man had been secured in an attempt to rob two travelers the very night after he had assassinated Don John. He knew that, under the circumstances in which he was taken, there was no hope of pardon. The hiding-place of his accomplices was discovered. Fearful that either of them should suffer unjustly for the murder of Don John de Mellas, he declared himself the author of the bloody deed. By his confession, it appeared that Don John had refused to deliver him his money, and had even struggled to deprive him of one of his pistols; in which struggle he suddenly drew his stiletto, and stabbed him to the heart. According to this account, it seemed by no means a premeditated affair; and

it was probable, that if Don John had tamely given up his purse, his life would have been saved. The remainder of the banditti had evacuated their habitation before the officers of the police arrived at it.

The culprit was executed according to his sentence. His behaviour at the awful period was penitent and commendable.

Osmund faithfully fulfilled his promise by relieving the wants of his wife and child. Although greatly oppressed at the recent melancholy circumstances which had surrounded him, he was not languid in his exertions to discover Leonora. He wrote to several of his friends, who were distributed at different parts of Spain, for that purpose; but mentioned no reasons for his curiosity, nor gave any particular detail of the events which occasioned it. His efforts, however, were useless: their answers proved unsatisfactory; and he still remained irresolute in what manner to act.

He received about this period a letter from Albert, who had left his former retreat, and was at the time of his writing at Murcia, to which city he repaired soon after he

heard Cassandra had removed there. He informed him he kept as private as possible, for fear of alarming the suspicions of Don Everard, who never suffered his daughter to go out unaccompanied by himself.

That part of his epistle which mentioned Orlando was thus worded:—

“ I must not forget to tell you, I have seen your brother several times since my arrival at this place, although I believe he did not discover me. I must confess I wish rather to avoid him under my present circumstances. He lives in much affluence. His piety, virtue, and so forth, are the talk of the city. His uncle must greatly have increased his establishment since he quitted Olvernardo.”

Albert concluded with a strong invitation to his friend to join him.

These few lines concerning his brother occasioned Osmund considerable surprise. Don Diego had mentioned to him but a short time before, that he had not then increased his quarterly remittance, although he had it in contemplation to do so. How Orlando could afford to live in the manner hinted at

by Albert, was a mystery he could in no respect unravel. He was very certain his brother was not rich when he left Madrid ; although he was informed the few debts which he had contracted were honourably discharged. He knew that he had gamed, and was confident he generally lost. Orlando was not calculated to exist by gambling, and, according to Albert's account, he must in that respect have entirely reformed. The source from which his great affluence was derived was a subject of wonder. Osmund in vain attempted to form some idea that might elucidate it ; but his exertions were useless. However Orlando might have shunned those advances towards his friendship he had often made, yet he still felt an affection towards him that made him anxious for his welfare. He was not envious of the elevated state in which his brother lived ; but, according to the observations he had made upon Orlando's character, he would have been much more happy if the intelligence had explained some satisfactory method by which he attained it. He conceived, however, that this might perhaps

be easily answered, but that Albert had no opportunity or desire to search for such information.

Osmund found himself inclined to accept his friend's proposal of meeting him at Murcia. He greatly needed some relief to his present *ennui*. It was in vain he mixed with the fashionable and gay society of Seville. The figure of Leonora still haunted him; the mysterious, the terrific monk, was continually before his eyes; his fatal prophetic whisper on the terrace of Olvernardo at intervals he could almost believe again sounded in his ear.

He at length resolved upon the journey; and, after settling his affairs at Seville, and leaving the care of his house and principal concerns to signior Zadok Bellzenipp and Fabian, departed for Murcia.

CHAP. XXIII.

How many frightful stops would conscience make
In some soft heads, to undertake like me?

Come, this conscience is a convenient scare-crow;
It guards the fruit which priests and wise men taste,
Who never set it up to fright themselves.

They know 'tis rags, and gather in the face on't;

While half-starv'd shallow daws thro' fear are honest.

SHAKSPEARE.

ORLANDO's mode of conduct after his arrival at Murcia was entirely different from that at Madrid; it was more congenial to his taste, more suitable to his purpose, and better calculated to answer those expectations he had long cherished, and which he could not under any circumstances resign.

Orlando found in his servant Otto an able instructor in the art of finesse: it was an ingredient he much wanted, to rectify and improve those natural qualities he possessed to impose upon the world, and prey upon that credulity he had formerly so amply

possessed himself, and which he was now so ready to take advantage of in others. His penetration had led him to observe that all men did not generally appear what they really were ; that their public and private actions greatly differed, and could by no means be traced to the same causes, or accounted for on the same principles. Otto had preached this truth in most of his daily lectures to his master, for Otto could now preach to his master without fear or hesitation. Their last act of coalition in the robbery of the poor recluse had bound them together by the strongest ties, and their different degrees in station from that period must be considered merely as a superficial dress of the characters they performed in the theatre of life. Orlando soon discovered the hints he received from Otto answered to his wishes. He now regretted he had not acted with more caution at Olvernardo. He need not to have gone openly to a gaming-table, or been seen, by those whom he wished to avoid, surrounded by men of infamous character. He, however, yet congratulated himself that points of still greater magnitude were con-

cealed ; and those few indiscretions which were known would hereafter be considered as juvenile foibles, and allowances made for them accordingly. In Murcia he resolved to be more cautious in his pleasures ; to gratify them in secret, while the purity of his public character might prevent his private one from being so rigidly scrutinized. He still dwelled upon his late interview with his father under sensations the most various and distressing. He trembled at the recollection of his escape from imbruing his hands in his blood ; and while he traced the comforts he might have experienced in embracing him under the name of parent, he reflected on his acquiring a knowledge of his unworthiness with distraction. The whole of the events relative to his father were a mystery he found it impossible to develop. He dreaded his brother or uncle having a knowledge of his existence ; it might discover him as his assassin by the very great resemblance he bore to the former : but, to his astonishment, the letters he received from them made no mention of their having seen or heard any

intelligence of Don Alphonso. Orlando was necessitated to let his curiosity remain ungratified, as even an attempt to satisfy it called forth the resentment of the monk.

A short time after his arrival at Murcia he hired a handsome house in the principal part of the city, engaged several domestics, and fixed a considerable household establishment, of which Otto was head. He assumed his own name, visited all the places of public entertainment, religiously attended the cathedral, gave public alms to the poor, and sumptuous feasts to the rich. He displayed his learning, was listened to with attention, and always applauded. The general talk was of Don Orlando de Mellas, the new inhabitant of Murcia. His affluence, his generosity, his religion, his erudition, were universal topics of conversation; and Orlando at last obtained something like that reputation for which he had so long languished. Still he was not the easy man of fashion; his unconquerable diffidence remained. At times he felt its effects with full force, and despaired of ever overcom

ing the disagreeables it occasioned. There were moments when certain points of conversation struck him to the soul, and his attempts became useless to conceal the blush which they occasioned. He could not stifle the reflexion, that the wealth with which he was so profuse, so liberal, and unbounded, was the produce of a base theft; by which he had destroyed the man who had nourished him in moments when he was unable to assist himself, and to whom he had most villanously repaid these acts of genuine hospitality by ingratitude of the darkest dye. He could discover no antidote for such thoughts: they were spontaneous, and were not to be smothered. Nor could he listen to the various compliments which were paid him for his generosity, benevolence, religion, &c. with perfect composure: conscious how little he merited them, he was even at times suspicious they were intended as oblique hints at his former conduct, although the person who uttered them had known him but a few days.

A short time after his settlement at Mur-

cia he gave a dinner to a large party, in a style of much splendor. The windows of the room in which they took their wine and dessert opened to a large square. Their good cheer was made public to every mendicant as he passed. A man and woman, seemingly not above thirty, accompanied by two children, suddenly stopped before the plentiful scene. Their clothes were much worn, and their general appearance bespoke them objects of charity; yet there was an inexpressible something in their countenances and manners, which led the observer to believe they were far above the common class of beggars. One of the guests, a tall thin gentleman, who had been lately appointed one of the magistrates of the city, had a great antipathy to beggars of all kinds. He could only account for it by his mother having been frightened by one at the time she was pregnant with him. This gentleman, with averted eyes, waved his right hand with great solemnity for them to withdraw, at the same time informing the company it would be impossible for *him* to support their approach. The young man

however did not heed the motion which was made him to depart; but, drawing nearer the windows, lifted up his hands in a supplicating posture, and pointed to the woman and children as the objects for whom he wished to move their humanity. The alarm of the justice now seemed to spread through the chief part of the assembly: that their conviviality should be intruded upon by the cries of the distressed was not to be endured; it was shameful that the police did not prevent such encroachments, so very disgusting to the higher orders of the community. Still the intruder ventured to proceed, and the party listened to the sound of his voice, with astonishment at his audacity in attempting to speak under such circumstances.

“I ask nothing of you for myself,” he cried: “I only entreat you to spare a trifle from the superfluities which surround you, to raise these sinking objects of my affection.”

He pointed to his wife and children, and burst into tears.

“Oh, signiors!” he exclaimed, “you

have all experienced those ties of nature which unite you, with irresistible strength, to the bosoms of your family; you have beheld the dimpled smile of infant innocence in the child you have adored; and you have gazed with ecstasy on its mother: but you have never beheld them fainting for the common nourishments of existence; you have never seen them droop before you for that sustenance you was unable to procure. Such are the pangs which ring my soul at this instant, and urge me to interrupt you by my complaints."

Orlando now rose: his eyes had been fixed upon the mendicants from their first arrival, and he thus addressed his guests:

"Signiors, will you permit me to gratify a momentary impulse? I have the strongest inclination to relieve these poor wretches with my own hand: they shall not intrude upon you but for an instant. Otto shall take the charge of them."

He advanced towards the woman with a glass of wine and some slices of cake. Her husband elevated his hands and eyes towards heaven with astonishment and rapture.

Can the guests, who were seated round the hospitable board of Orlando, be charged with simplicity or want of penetration, in the general ideas they experienced, that such conduct could proceed only from the benevolence and goodness of his heart?—Surely not: it was a probable supposition, and they felt as he intended they should feel. It is necessary however the reader should not fall into the same error, and that the secret springs which operated in this instance in the mind of Orlando should be laid open.

Immediately he glanced his eyes on the group which approached the windows, he discovered in the countenance of the female a degree of exquisite beauty and sensibility, which fired those passions he was now less than ever able to controul. Orlando saw all the probable advantages or disadvantages which might occur in an amour of this kind, in the short space of time he remained silent, which was occupied with the volubility of the magistrate who had so strong a dislike to beggars.

It may be conceived strange that such a

man as Orlando should become enamoured of an apparent common mendicant: but his taste was not so delicate or refined as might have been expected; his passions were strong, and his gratification of them indiscriminate. There was likewise another convenience arising from connexions of this kind—he was able to keep them more private; a consideration of some consequence under his present mode of conduct. As he stretched out his hand with the salver which held the refreshment for the almost famished beggars, he by chance observed more attentively the features of the man, which were in part disfigured by the little attention he seemed to have paid to cleanliness, and discovered, with infinite astonishment and some degree of remorse, the son of the late unfortunate recluse, the rightful heir to the wealth which purchased him his present luxuries.

The salver nearly dropped from his hand, and he started back with an involuntary exclamation of surprise. He soon however recovered his composure, and apologised for the sudden indisposition he felt.

Otto was called, and ordered to take care

of the mendicants. He proposed placing them in a small hovel which stood near the house, and which might be easily rendered comfortable for their reception. Orlando approved of the thought; and, to the great relief of the company (and particularly the magistrate), they were conducted from their presence. However they might dislike the intrusion, this act of Orlando's had its full effect: his fine feelings, his benevolence, his great charity and philanthropy, were soon whispered through the city, and this event quoted as an instance of it. No sooner were his guests departed than Orlando had a conference with Otto. Otto had discovered the features of the beggars, but he managed to conceal his surprise much better than his master. Orlando informed him of the passion he had conceived for Helen (which he now understood was the name of the female), and seemed to think there was little danger in gratifying it. Upon this point Otto and his master differed: the former was rather doubtful of his safety in such an attempt, but he gave it up to the superior judgment of the latter.

Their plans were laid accordingly. the

mendicants were furnished with other clothing, and the man informed he would be required to make himself useful to his benefactor in overlooking some labourers, who were employed in altering the course of a small canal which ran near the back part of his house. -By this arrangement Helen was left alone with her children, and Orlando often (as if by chance) passed that way, and looked in to see if they were well treated. He found her manners delicate and refined. The tale of their misfortunes was not kept from him. With the principal parts he was too well acquainted. They had not left the West Indies rich; and the whole of the little property they had saved to bring with them to their native country was plundered, in common with other valuables, by an Algerine corsair, who boarded the vessel, and who would in all probability have made the crew prisoners, had not a violent storm necessitated them to return all hands to their own xebeck, while by day-light the following morning the vessel which they had abandoned was too far a-head of her enemy

to stand any chance of being taken. This loss was sustained with some degree of fortitude, when they supposed the necessaries of life were already provided for them in Spain by Don Francis, and would enable them, at all events, to subsist comfortably until young Valvard could procure some active employment which might add to their income. But how great were their disappointment and despair when, having expended their last rial to gain the cottage of the recluse, they found he had expired a few hours before their arrival, and left scarcely sufficient property to defray the expenses of his funeral !

Clement was not without his errors. He had a proud soul. He well knew there were persons who in all probability would have assisted him, had he chosen to have made the application ; but he wished to avoid them. He considered, if he could once get with his family to Murcia, he could find employment. He knew it to be a place noted for the residence of several merchants, and he considered it was to a man in such a profession he could make himself useful. Un-

der these ideas they commenced their journey, with money barely sufficient to support them with food during the time it might take them to arrive there by casual conveyances.

One of their children was taken sick on the road. They were obliged to remain some days at an obscure inn, the expenses of which entirely beggared them; and they were even obliged to part with some of their clothes to satisfy the landlord for the necessaries they had received for their sickly infant.

They recommenced their traveling with all the horrors of absolute distress for that allowance of food actually requisite to support their existence. In the parts through which they continued their journey they were totally unknown even by name, and were obliged to depend on the charity of those whom they met for the stinted meals which they procured.

Under these dreadful circumstances they arrived at Murcia, and had tasted little for three days, when they entered the city; which urged the forcible application of Cle-

ment to Orlando, who was the first person they saw likely to give succour to their wants. Orlando would listen to this tale of woe related by Helen with all the apparent sympathy to be distinguished in one of the most fine feelings. He declared he would himself make a point of procuring Valvard some employment more suitable to his abilities than the task in which he was at present engaged. He caressed their children with an unusual warmth of affection, and he gazed on their mother with more than common attention. Helen's conduct towards her benefactor was such as the most heartfelt gratitude inspired. Orlando's penetration failed him. His full confidence in his own abilities to please fired him with the idea that his conquest over her virtue would be easily achieved, and under these mistaken considerations he made the attempt sooner than he would otherwise have thought prudent.

It was but a few days after his protection to the unfortunate mendicants that he called on Helen, and, as usual, found her alone, Otto having taken care that her husband

should be absent from her as much as possible. His advances towards a confession of his passion were slow, and uttered with some degree of hesitation. Orlando had not yet acquired confidence to become a bold and daring villain. His whole career in vice was characterised by a cowardly consideration of his personal safety. In the gratification of every desire, dastardly and selfish motives only could make him cautious.

Helen heard his confession with horror; for a moment she was speechless with the surprise and agony it occasioned. Orlando took advantage of this short period, and clasped her to his breast. She struggled with uncommon power, and disengaged herself from his embrace.

“Villain!” she exclaimed, while the anger which flashed from her eyes abashed and discomposed him, “is it for such motives as these that your charity and religion are held up as models of perfection in Murcia? Have you similar views under all those boasted acts which adorn your name, and

acquire you a more than common degree of popularity ?”

“Be prudent,” answered Orlando, in some degree recovering himself: “you are not perhaps aware of the power I possess either to relieve or crush you. Reflect but for a moment: the fate of those little ones (pointing to her children) in part depends upon yourself: be not cruel then, Helen, either to them or me. They shall be reared in affluence; every advantage which fortune is capable of purchasing shall be lavished on their education. Are these gifts which should be forfeited by a mother, under the false and idle punctilios of the world ?”

“Should they be purchased,” answered Helen bursting into tears, “by the infamy, the disgrace of their parents ?”

“Oh God !” she exclaimed, “thou art acquainted with my affection towards these babes; thou only knowest the rapture, the ecstasy, with which I first held them to my breast. Yet was their very existence to depend upon my acquiescence to an act which would make them hereafter blush at the

name of her who gave them being, I would watch with joy the last breath of life tremble on their lips, and view with rapture their beloved forms wrapped in eternal sleep."

"Come, come," said Orlando, "these are mere romantic airs: I must not listen to them. This glorious opportunity must not be lost. Your cries are useless: no one is near to heed them."

With these words he grasped her with the most brutal violence. Her shrieks were loud. Orlando was mistaken in his assertion of no one being near to answer them: the injured Clement burst into the cottage, and stood before his astonished trembling *benefactor*. He seized Orlando: a struggle ensued, during which they got outside the door. Orlando's nerves were weakened with conscious guilt; those of his opponent braced by a sense of his injuries, and a recollection of the justness of his cause. A conquest over Orlando at this moment required no great efforts. He sunk at the feet of Clement, who at the moment elevated a poniard he had seized from the side of his

adversary, and aimed it at his heart. Helen followed them, seized his arm, and sunk on the bosom of her husband.

A labouring man beheld the scene on the outside of the cottage at some distance. Orlando observed him advancing before he fell. Although his courage had forsaken him, his mind was perfectly alive both to his personal danger and reputation. He suddenly drew his purse from his pocket, and threw it towards Valvard. By the time the man whom he had seen at a distance, and who was now running towards the spot, arrived within hearing, Orlando uttered the following words :

“Ungrateful wretch ! was it not enough that I relieved you not only from the poverty and distress which surrounded you, that I supplied you not only with the necessaries, but with the comforts of existence, that you should thus attempt to assassinate me for the paltry gold which I carry in my pockets ?”

The labourer heard these words distinctly, and instantly seized Clement, whose astonishment prevented his reply. Helen, in

the most extreme agony, informed the man he was mistaken, that there were other reasons for her husband's conduct; but he paid little attention to her cries or entreaties, and only uttered reproaches for their black ingratitude to so kind and good a benefactor.

Orlando, after receiving his poniard, returned to his house. Otto soon arrived at the spot. The unfortunate man was secured, and, with his wife and children, immediately conveyed to the prison of Murcia; where he was separated from them, and thrust into one of the most gloomy cells it contained. Helen and her infants were placed in another at a considerable distance. Their expostulations were in vain; they were answered only by the most taunting and severe reproaches; while Clement was given to understand, death was the certain consequence of his conduct.

The affair was in a very short time made known through the city. Congratulations to Don Orlando poured in from every part, while the most bitter epithets were lavished against the wretch who had attempted to destroy him.

The following morning an examination of the circumstances took place before the magistrate who had so great an antipathy to beggars. He declared it made him nervous to look at the culprit. He could perceive the word murderer written upon his forehead in letters of blood; while he shook in his chair as if he had been agitated by an earthquake. This same gentleman had lately received some considerable honours from his sovereign for his very *great exertions* in quelling a faction which had more than once attempted to rise in opposition to his will. Indeed, the learned magistrate was at times rather petulant: but he was never known to make any grand mistake in his professional capacity but once, when he sent a respectable citizen to the house of correction because he looked like a rogue—and was unfortunately obliged publicly to retract his opinion, and acknowledge his error by paying for it.

It may be supposed Valvard had not a very merciful judge. His defence, however, was firm and spirited; but it was useless. When he attempted to relate the behaviour

of Orlando to his wife, so shocking, so depraved a lie could not be endured. It occasioned the auditors to lift up their eyes to heaven ; while it made those of the poor prisoner glisten with a sense of his oppression. He was fully committed for trial before a higher tribunal, whose decision would be definite. This ceremony took place a few days after his first examination.

The circumstances which were to be brought forward were well known to most present. Immediately Orlando appeared in court he was complimented by several judges of the tribunal, and requested to be seated on their bench.

The prisoner was beheld with eyes of disgust and horror. The women almost fainted at the sight of him, and pointed him to their children as an example of the most base depravity. The trial commenced. Orlando's charge was rather faltering. In spite of his efforts to annihilate such ideas, the reverend figure of the prisoner's father was fixed upon his mind : he saw his countenance beam with benevolence, as at those moments when in the intervals of the delirium

under which he had laboured at the cottage, he remembered to have seen him administer medicines made up by his own hand, and speak words of comfort to his disordered and agitated mind. It was the son, the beloved son of that man, whose life he was then sacrificing. He dared not look at the prisoner: the spirit of his departed parent glared in his eyes; and he sunk from the reflexions it inspired.

His distress, his confusion, and terror, the effects of his guilt, were universally allowed to arise from his very fine feelings. The gentlemen offered their assistance; the ladies offered their smelling-bottles. The wife of the culprit, who had supported her children for a considerable length of time, was observed to faint. No lady offered *her* a smelling-bottle; no one attempted to give *her* assistance but her husband.

The scene was at length closed with the awful sentence of death being passed upon Valvard. It was true he was asked for a defence, and he attempted to make one; but the principal points on which it rested were scouted at in a similar manner as on

his examination before the magistrate who had so great an antipathy to beggars. The females could not hear the relation : it made them blush—it made them weep ; and the idea of such falsehoods being uttered against so good a man made them angry.

No sooner was sentence passed upon the unfortunate prisoner, than silence was ordered in the court ; and Orlando, who had recovered considerably from his indisposition, gracefully rose, and addressed them in a speech of much eloquence, which he had well studied for the occasion before he came to the tribunal. The subject of it was, that the culprit at the bar condemned to die, might, in his name, be humbly recommended to the mercy of his most catholic majesty. He begged, he entreated as one of the greatest favors that could be bestowed upon him, that it might be urged with all possible force:—as his life had been preserved, he by no means wished to retaliate by sacrificing the man who had attempted to deprive him of it.

A buzz of admiration ran through the court. How merciful ! how generous ! how

magnanimous ! He was highly complimented by the judges, and universally applauded by the assembly.

A petition the following day was dispatched to the king in Orlando's name. His majesty was pleased to pass several encomiums upon him, and, as it was *his* peculiar desire, pardoned the culprit provided he should be condemned to the galleys, under the same regulations to which the criminals were usually subject who were sent there. Clement accepted this grace in sullen silence. His wife and children were permitted to accompany him ; but, during the time they remained at a sea-port, under the most rigorous confinement, Valvard was seized with a fever which raged among the prisoners, and of which he died in the course of a few days ; while the unfortunate Helen and her infants did not survive him six months. Orlando, by means of this incident, gained a degree of popularity in Murcia which he would otherwise perhaps have never acquired. His name was a general theme for praise and commendation : in short, it became fashionable to admire him. He was

industrious to maintain so enviable a state of pre-eminence. It was well suited to his disposition, and what he had long most ardently coveted. He distributed numberless sums of money among the poor in the most public manner, while he artfully contrived to insinuate he did not wish such acts to be made known. He subscribed to various public charities, and mementos of such subscriptions were generally found in the rooms where visitors were introduced. He daily attended mass, gave dinners to the priests, and voluntarily offered his mite towards their funds and institutions. Under these cloaks, Orlando found means to gratify his passions with perfect security. He contrived to game with those who were equally tenacious of their characters as himself. They met in an obscure part of the city, generally disguised, in a house which they supported, and in which they placed a rigid devotee as the inhabitant. This man prayed from sun-rise to sun-set, and sung hymns two hours morning and evening. He consequently had no time to procure a dwelling by his own industry: the providing of all

necessaries was left to his saint. He soon found, however, his saint was but a bad caterer. He grew thin; his prayers were reduced to a whisper; and he could only sing his hymns in a feeble tenor. He discovered one night, after praying and singing in his usual way, that he had no lodging to which he could retire. He again trusted to his saint; but she gave him only the highway for a resting-place. The devotee conceived this to be rather ill treatment, and he determined for the future to go to market for himself. He was fixed upon to keep this house. It was considered by the proprietors that the sanctity of his deportment would at once screen from the eyes of the world the use they intended to make of it. The devotee was reduced to that situation which made him gladly accept the offer. His time was so much taken up in the adoration of his saint, that, whatever scenes passed in the house, he was always unacquainted with them. The place was found useful for other purposes as well as gaming. The premises were spacious; and a number of chambers were fitted up for the reception

of the visitors, and those females whom they might wish to introduce. Nothing could be conducted with more privacy : no parade of servants or waiters : each had a key of his own apartment, by which he could enter it at any hour of the night, without notice or observation. Few who attended used their real names, and were chiefly unknown to each other.

Orlando was one evening coming out of the cathedral, to which he had been, as usual, to attend vespers. The serenity of the sky tempted him to pace the portico for some time after the congregation had dispersed. It was already twilight, and the gloom of the place rendered the objects which at intervals passed him rather indistinct ; when the form of Theodosius de Zulvin, the monk, suddenly stood before him.

Orlando had not seen him since his first arrival at the city of Murcia.

He beckoned him to follow to an interior aisle in the cathedral. They soon arrived at the spot, and Theodosius thus addressed him :—

“Signior Don Orlando, you perceive I have not forgotten you. For your present mode of existence, so truly congenial to your taste, I conceive I have some demand upon your gratitude.”

Orlando bowed assent to the assertion.

“Your gratitude,” he continued, “is a feeble tie: I disdain to hold it. You well know I have other powers to enforce my demands.

“Cassandra de Gosmond is arrived at Murcia. I well knew she was destined to visit this city, which urged me to lay so considerable a stress on your taking up your abode within its walls. You failed in your first attempt on this beauty; but the completion must not be given up.”

The eyes of Orlando glistened with joy. His passion for Cassandra revived with the idea that a probability of gratification yet remained.

“We must act with caution,” continued Theodosius. “You must discover the residence of Don Everard; visit him, and insinuate yourself into his favour. In the mean

time some scheme shall be invented to secure his daughter:—this shall be my task. In the course of a few days we meet again.”

“When and where?” exclaimed Orlando with eagerness.

“Perhaps at a moment,” replied the priest, “when you will least expect to see me. Our interviews are sudden and unexpected: it is necessary they should be so.”

As he uttered these words, Orlando lost his figure in the gloom of the distant part of the aisle.

He proceeded slowly home, ruminating on the information he had received.

Otto was immediately dispatched to one of the principal hotels, to look at the list of arrivals from Madrid, and soon found the names of Don Everard and his daughter. He was told by the landlord that they had taken a handsome house at no great distance from that of his master. Otto instantly returned with this agreeable intelligence to Orlando. Don Everard, they found, had not entered the city above twelve hours; and Orlando was certain, before he passed as many more,

that public report would whisper his character under the most favourable description. He therefore wished that the father of Cassandra should receive those impressions before he paid him a visit, which he determined to delay for a day or two.

Orlando, directly he had formed this resolution, dressed and proceeded to the gaming-table. Fortune was in his favour: he won considerably, and remained even longer than usual. It was day-break when he quitted the rendezvous. He generally contrived to gain his own house before the morning light, which rendered him liable to discovery, by being met in the streets at so early an hour.

He wrapped his cloak close over him, and proceeded with great caution towards his habitation, through most of the by-streets which led to it. One of these took him to the market-place, and he was necessitated to cross an angle of it; which he would rather have avoided, a number of persons having already assembled.

He had not proceeded many paces through the crowd, when he felt his cloak

suddenly pulled by some one behind, and on turning round he discovered the grotesque figure of Don Esau de Cavet. He was mounted upon a lean mule, and muffled up in an old rough surtout, which had the appearance of a blanket. A long thick stick, which he held in his hand, seemed aptly designed to belabour the ribs of the beast on which he rode; and both he and the mule looked as if he had used great exertion in that way.

Orlando, although astonished at seeing him, and not insensible to considerable resentment against him for his conduct the last time they played (in which he bankrupted him of the money belonging to the marquis of Olvernardo), could not refrain from smiling at the strange situation in which he now discovered him.

“In the name of heaven,” cried he, “what could bring you to this city, and have occasioned you to appear under so strange a character as that in which I now behold you?”

“Don’t care what character I appear in,” replied Don Esau, “to get money. Don’t you see those caravans yonder?” pointing

with his finger to two of the worst, with the most miserable cattle in the whole market.

Orlando said he did.

“They belong to me,” continued Don Esau, “and are loaded with jars of olives, which I was told by a correspondent sold at a very high price in this market: so I packed up, in the twinkling of an eye; purchased the two caravans and mules, a bargain, of an old jew, who was sent to the Inquisition for comparing the pope’s head to a pumpkin: hired but one driver; got him for half price; not quite perfect to be sure, wants a leg and an arm, but will serve my turn all the same for that: took the mule which I ride for a bad debt, and purchased my surtout from the body of a watchman who dropped down dead on his duty. It has been a cheap journey altogether; kept the man upon soup and eggs; told him it was good for his body, and the limbs which he had left; let my mules feed upon hay which we found by chance in the road, and treated them with a few meals of grass which we saw in some retired fields as we came along. Have tasted nothing myself, but some old

crusts which I put in my pocket when I left Madrid—excellent food for traveling: besides, servants can't grumble when they see their masters live worse than themselves.

“But what the devil have you been at, my boy, all this time? Popp'd out of Madrid all on a sudden—nobody knew where. Very happy to see you though, upon my soul! Where do you live? Call upon you after the market is over. Sold several jars of my olives already: touched them pretty high, and did not warrant them. A few rotten ones at the bottom; but don't mind that, rub it all off by confession when I get home.”

Orlando's greeting to his old friend was not very warm. He could not forget his conduct on the fatal night on which he won the two thousand pistoles. Don Esau observed it.

“You look devilish grave, Don Orlando,” said he. “Methinks you recollect with some degree of spleen our last meeting. Never mind it; I will give you your revenge now. Play you at night for what you like:

never flinch ; always like to make things agreeable."

Such a hint was enough to raise in the mind of Orlando a hope that he might yet retaliate : at all events the prospect of playing was with him too tempting an offer to be refused. He appointed to meet him at an hotel near the market-place in the evening. He did not at present wish to give him an invitation to his house, and stood upon no ceremony to apologise for not doing so.

At this moment Don Esau's one-legged driver approached towards him as fast as he was able, to say that there was another customer for some more of his olives.

Don Esau, after laying a considerable stress upon the appointment which he had made with Orlando, precipitately departed ; while the blows which he laid upon the ribs of the poor animal he rode produced sounds that well foretold the emptiness of his belly.

However Orlando might have conceived himself injured by this man, in the illiberality of his conduct the last time they played,

yet he was a companion in his favourite passion of too much consequence to be given up on such grounds. Don Esau had plenty of money: Don Esau would hazard it on the dice. These were qualifications of no mean degree in the eyes of Orlando. His play with Don Esau might be kept as secret as his general visit to the subscription-house. On one point he still remained undetermined for some time, whether he should introduce him to that house. There was one strong reason against it: Don Esau might engage with others as well as him; by which means he would lose many chances of fleecing him. Still he considered, were their meetings held at any other place, such consequences were equally probable; and he at length determined, after laying on him a strict charge of secresy, to present him as a friend at his nightly place of rendezvous.

CHAP. XXIV.

What, shall we wear these glories for a day?
Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?

SHAKSPEARE.

ORLANDO waited most anxiously for the hour of his appointment with the miser. His manner of living was affluent; which added to the money he was necessitated to give away to support that character for liberality which he had acquired, as well as his casual losings at the gaming-table, rendered a replenishment of his income as a point to which it was necessary he should look forward.

Orlando wisely considered, it would not be policy to defer it so long; that he might be in danger of becoming distressed for money; and although the present state of his pecuniary affairs rendered such precautions by no means necessary for a considerable time, yet he determined even now to lose no opportunity that might lead to such arrangements.

His meeting with Don Esau was an event which gave him at least a chance to enrich himself. There was little doubt but he was wealthy : there was no doubt but he would play as long as Orlando would keep him company ; and the payments of his *debts of honour* were perhaps more strictly adhered to than any other debts.

Orlando was punctual, and so was Don Esau. They met each other entering the hotel, and they immediately adjourned to the house already described. Fortune this evening was on Orlando's side. He left off a winner of fourteen hundred pistoles.

They parted at an early hour of the morning, under an appointment of meeting again the following evening.

Orlando the next day determined to fulfil the instructions of the monk, and wait upon Don Everard de Gosmond.

Don Everard received him with more than usual warmth : he had heard his benevolence, his charity, &c. &c. loudly echoed through Murcia.

"I was certain," said he to his daughter,

“ the virtues of this young man would some day or other shine conspicuous in the world.”

Orlando was a public character ; Orlando lived like a prince. It was impossible but Don Everard should be happy in his acquaintance, and he was almost angry because his daughter was not as happy as himself upon the occasion.

Cassandra had heard Albert's opinion of Orlando : she could not admire him with the enthusiasm of her father. The name of Albert was silently cherished in her bosom. She dared not either name *him* or the family of Olvernardo. But Don Everard could not command her thoughts. The figure of her adored Albert, cruel as she might conceive his conduct, was continually before her. Cassandra was of a disposition to suffer injuries with too placid a nature ; there was not a being in existence whom she would have rendered unhappy, or have wished to have been so. She had the strongest reason to believe Albert had most shamefully forfeited all right to her affections—but the affections of Cassandra were not to be

forfeited ; they would have remained under far greater insults : in short, they were not to be annihilated by any insults whatever.

Such traits, perhaps, are not to be admired ; but it must be considered they were errors of the mind, not of the heart.

Don Everard accepted Orlando's invitation to dine with him the following day. Both he and his daughter were astonished at the sumptuous manner in which they were entertained. The rooms of reception were fitted up in the utmost style of elegance, and the repast consisted of every delicacy which could be procured. There was other company. Don Everard considered such an arrangement as a high mark of respect and friendship. Several incidents occurred during the visit to give the guests an idea of Orlando's charity and benevolence. Otto, in a half whisper, yet loud enough to be heard by the visitors, requested to know if he was to continue paying the last pensioner on his bounty as usual. A petition from a poor family was presented, and Orlando slipped something into the hand of Otto,

which Otto artfully contrived to insinuate was six pistoles.

Don Everard was charmed with his host. He found himself unusually comfortable. Cassandra was languid and depressed. Don Everard in a part of his discourse mentioned the inhabitants of Olvernardo with considerable chagrin.

“They have used me cruelly, Don Orlando,” he exclaimed. “The wrongs which I have received can never be forgotten or forgiven.”

Orlando pretended to be greatly affected: he condoled with him on the subject. He confessed, he was sorry to say, that the proceedings of some parts of the family were not, in his opinion, so consistent with morality as was necessary. He could not help observing it was on this account he quitted Madrid. It was not his place to censure: at the same time, had he continued under their roof, his character would have been in danger of suffering those stigmas which their conduct occasioned. He owned thus much was spoken in confidence; but he

knew it was to a friend, and he hoped, he trusted, it would go no farther.

“Noble youth,” cried Don Everard, “how few are there to be found in this frail world like you, who can give lessons to the old which they would do well to profit by ! I can conceive the gratification which your uncle Don Diego must experience in being thus permitted to see so full, so convincing a proof of success in *his system of education*.”

Orlando was gratified, highly gratified, with the effects which he had produced upon Don Everard. But his eyes in vain searched for similar ones in Cassandra. He watched her countenance during his recitals to her father with the most scrutinising attention ; but he could trace from it nothing which he wished : although she made no objections to his assertions, he could perceive she did not entirely agree with them : he could plainly discover Albert still possessed her heart, and he had sagacity enough to entertain little hopes of an alteration in her sentiments. He in vain attempted to dispel her melancholy by various little attentions or assiduities during the day ; but she ap-

peared indifferent to his efforts to please; and scarcely attended to the conversation in which he wanted to engage her.

Orlando had before this interview encouraged a hope, that her affections towards Albert might by recent events have been shaken; and, under those circumstances, he rested with some confidence on the probability of his being able to make himself agreeable to her. But he was now convinced such hopes were vain, and that Cassandra must again be assailed by a similar act of perfidy to that which he had already attempted without success.

He experienced, however, considerable satisfaction in the behaviour of Don Everard, with whom he plainly foresaw he could establish that kind of intimacy which would almost daily introduce him to his daughter. He took his leave greatly pleased with the entertainment he had received, and gave Orlando a general and pressing invitation to his house.

Orlando immediately on their departure proceeded to meet Don Esau. Don Esau, however, to his astonishment, was not at the

place of rendezvous. He inquired for him; but no such person had been there. He waited impatiently some hours. Don Esau, however, never appeared. He was at length extremely disconcerted and chagrined, and suspected the miser had found some other house for play, where it was probable he might be reduced to his last pistole before an opportunity could be gained to share in the booty.

At an early hour in the morning he returned home without having received any news of Don Esau. Otto was instantly dispatched to discover, if possible, the place of his abode, or (which was not unlikely) meet with him disposing of his olives.

Otto hurried accordingly into the midst of the market, but could not find Don Esau in any part of it. He inquired concerning him: every one knew him, but they could not tell where he resided, till by chance a carrier, recollected he had the morning before conveyed some articles to a house in which Don Esau said he lodged. The circumstance was

perfectly impressed upon the man's memory, for Don Esau had contrived to pay him only half price for his labour.

Otto directed the man to lead to the place. He followed him to a miserable part of the city, about half a league distant, where they turned down a small lane, the houses in which were inhabited only by the very lower orders of the people. The man suddenly stopped before one of the worst of them.

"Is it in the upper part of this house that Don Esau lives?" asked Otto, while he surveyed it with the utmost contempt.

"He lives in the basement," answered the man, "to which these steps will take you."

Otto's surprise increased, and at that moment a woman ascended from the place.

He asked if a person of Don Esau's description resided there. The woman answered him in the affirmative. "He is," said she, "I believe, at death's door. I sat up with him last night. He seems very poor, and deserves compassion, but he will not hear of a doctor or medicine; the mere naming

of them throws him into a rage. He seems a stranger to this city, and hired the room below but three days past."

Otto said he wished to see him. The woman conducted him down some dirty wooden steps, at the bottom of which she opened a small door that swung with pullies.

"He is, I believe," said she, "now asleep."

They entered a dark gloomy apartment, paved with flag stones. A lamp was suspended from the ceiling, the faint beams of which discovered the miserable appearance of the chamber. There was no furniture of any kind but an old bed and a broken chair. The walls were uncovered, except in parts where some madrigals and paltry prints were pasted against them.

Otto observed the figure of Don Esau extended on the bed. He seemed asleep, and they approached cautiously. The cloaths in which he had traveled to Murcia were still on his back. His face was ghastly pale, his eyes but half closed, and he breathed with difficulty. Otto observed his arms

were entwined round something which he grasped against his heart.

“That,” said the woman, observing he noticed it, “is a small box which he continually holds in this manner. We are at a loss to conjecture what it can contain.”

Otto was at no loss upon this point. He immediately conceived it held his money; but he thought it most prudent to keep the suspicion to himself, while he pretended to join with his companion in ignorance on the subject.

After acquainting her that he had some knowledge of her patient, he declared she should be no loser by her attention to him, and gave her strict orders not to quit him or admit any person to supply her place until his master arrived. The woman readily agreed to this arrangement.

Otto made the best of his way with the intelligence to Orlando, who, immediately he received the information, determined himself to visit Don Esau, and directly proceeded, according to the direction received from Otto, to the miserable dwelling of the

miser. Don Esau had by this time awoke. He beheld Orlando with surprise. He stretched out his hand to him, burning with fever, and he greeted him in a low and inward voice.

"I am very ill, signior Don Orlando," said he, while he attempted to raise himself, but sunk almost lifeless on his bed through the exertion.

Orlando made some inquiries concerning his indisposition, which Don Esau answered at intervals, and with great difficulty.

He understood, that, after they had separated on the morning on which Orlando's successful play had taken from him fourteen hundred pistoles, he repaired to the market-place, in order to dispose of the small remaining quantity of his olives. To sell them to as much advantage as possible, he traversed the market for a considerable time through several showers of rain. He had discharged the man whom he had brought with him from Madrid, and sold the caravans and mules, intending to return himself on foot. He neglected to change his clothes; but being extremely fatigued when

he arrived at his lodgings, he fell fast asleep with them upon his back. He awoke about nine in the morning, and found himself very ill. His complaint rapidly increased, and at night his fever was at an alarming height. Unable to move from his bed, the woman already mentioned by chance discovered him. She proposed sending for medical assistance, but the very mention of it served almost to drive him to distraction. He seemed delirious, and humanity prompted her to attend him that night, although there was no probability of her being recompensed for her trouble.

Orlando slightly spoke of procuring an apothecary. Don Esau raved as loud as he was able at the name. He appeared perfectly sensible, but his disorder seemed every moment to increase. Cold perspirations bedewed his face; his eyes were sunk, his lips in parts black; while violent shiverings, every two or three minutes, shook his whole frame, and were strong symptoms of approaching dissolution.

It may be asked why Orlando but slightly mentioned the procuring of medical assist-

ance. It was not because the idea seemed to distress Don Esau, or that he conceived his situation was such as to render all aid of that kind superfluous: Orlando had other motives in view. The moment he entered the miserable chamber of the dying miser, his eye caught the box, which was still pressed by both arms to his heart: he, as well as Otto, had little doubt but it contained considerable treasure; Don Esau, he well knew, would not have been able to have quitted Madrid without taking with him the chief part of his wealth. However strange it may appear, this conception was perfectly accurate; there was not a man in that city in whose hands he dared to trust his money: he was aware of the danger of traveling with it in such a journey, and had numberless struggles with himself on this point before he left the city: he placed it in various houses, and drew it out again; if he had it at his lodgings he could not sleep for watching of it. If he dreamed of it, it was, that he had lost it; and he was distracted till he had again counted the sum. Don Esau at length determined to

place it in the Spanish bank: he accordingly did so, and began his journey towards Murcia; in the evening, however, a raven croaked under the window of a hovel where they halted. Don Esau immediately construed it as an omen of poverty; he began to doubt the safety of the Spanish bank: on a sudden he turned his mule again towards Madrid; made his attendants follow him, and posted with all speed back to the capital, regained his wealth, reckoned it with ecstacy, placed it in a small box, and once more recommenced his journey. He was necessitated, on account of the size of this box, to take notes on the national bank: he never quited it; when out, he always had it under his arm; when at his lodgings, he still grasped it; and when he slept, it yet remained close to his heart. Orlando's aims were at this treasure; he conceived he should have some difficulty if it was not procured before Esau's dissolution; there was not a moment to be lost, and he resolved to exert his utmost in the experiment.

He suddenly pulled a box of dice from

his pocket, and rattled them with the motion of a throw: the eyes of the miser opened with quickness; he struggled faintly to rise; his whole body appeared electrified by the sound; every feature, even in the hour of death, underwent a slight alteration.

Orlando propped him up in his bed with a pillow, and then placed a hundred pistoles as a stake. Don Esau instantly produced a key which was tied round his wrist. Orlando offered to unlock the box, but he would not suffer him to approach; after some time, he succeeded in opening it himself, and threw a similar sum on the bed to that of his opponent.

Orlando threw first: Don Esau was unable to shake the box, but he would suffer no assistance; he feebly threw the dice from it—his stake was lost; he counted the odds with difficulty, and nearly fainted in the exertion. Orlando proposed doubling the sums; Don Esau assented, and again lost.

Orlando now placed five hundred pistoles upon the bed. The miser gazed upon the

money, and again paralleled it with five hundred more. Orlando threw first; he contrived to cog the dice without being perceived, and once more swept away the stakes. Don Esau groaned with agony; the last few moments of expiring life ebbed quickly; he drew forth a quantity of notes and gold, which he was unable to count: Orlando understood him, and did the same. Don Esau had now little chance: Orlando turned the dice as he thought proper, and seized the money which the miser still held, whose hands were too weak to retain it. Don Esau no sooner saw it wrested from him than his whole frame became convulsed; his face turned black; he grasped the residue of his treasure still closer to his heart, while his eyes glared on Orlando with the reproaches of a dying man, and in a few moments he sunk lifeless on the bed. Orlando instantly, with considerable precipitation, secured the contents of the box, which he disentangled from the arm of the corpse, leaving about twenty pistoles in gold coin; and having locked it, placed the key round his wrist as before. He then called the

people of the house, appeared much hurt at Don Esau's dissolution, and desired the last duties might be paid him with the utmost decency.

One of the women mentioned the box which the deceased had so carefully kept, and proposed that it should be opened in the presence of the worthy Don Orlando. He agreed to this arrangement, and it was accordingly unlocked;—the twenty pistoles were discovered: this fully accounted to the assembly for Don Esau's care of it. They considered him as a poor man, and supposed it was his only treasure: it was presented to Orlando, who declared the expenses of his funeral should be defrayed out of it, and the remainder divided between the woman who had attended him, the landlord, and the lodgers of the house.

The highest encomiums were passed upon him by all present; he was a pattern for the young men of the city—so humane, so generous; his kind attention to the deceased could have proceeded only from *disinterested* motives. He took his leave, and promised to send his servant to superintend the interment of Don Esau,

and dispose of the trifling property which he had left.

Orlando, highly gratified with his morning's adventure, returned immediately to his own house, and, having bolted the door of his apartment, began to count his new acquired wealth. He found, in notes and cash, it consisted of upwards of forty thousand pistoles: he beheld the treasure with ecstasy, and congratulated himself on the dexterous manner in which he had procured it. He had no doubt but Don Esau, in some way or other, possessed considerable more, and he well knew he had relations in very distressed circumstances; he therefore determined himself to send the intelligence to Madrid of his death, under the artful insinuation of giving them an opportunity to collect his property, as such a mode of conduct he considered would at once annihilate any suspicions which might arise of *his* being able to give an account of it.

Otto was shortly informed of his good fortune, and received six thousand pistoles as his share of the booty. He immediately repaired to the place which contained the remains of the miser, and gave

orders for his funeral. In a few days the body was decently buried; Otto officiated as chief mourner, who, having paid the expenses, divided the remaining pistoles as his master had ordered.

Orlando wisely determined for the present to content himself without increasing his domestic establishment or expenses in such a manner as would occasion public notice of the alteration, which he considered might cause inquiries he greatly wished to avoid; for although he saw no possible means of any charges being proved against him, still he wished to avoid the slightest imputation of them.

His intimacy with Don Everard increased according to his wishes. He mentioned to him his visit to Don Esau in the hour of dissolution, carefully concealing his former concerns with him.

Don Everard expressed much concern for his fate, and wondered if he had left much money behind. Then dropped the conversation, and thought of it no more.

Cassandra still remained melancholy and dejected. The exertions and tenderness of her father were useless to restore her to her

usual spirits ; while she received Orlando's attentions with a coolness which rather increased than diminished.

As he was one evening sitting with them at the theatre, he beheld on a sudden, at some distance, Albert d'Olvernardo. Orlando observed his eyes were turned towards the box in which they sat. He attempted to conceal himself behind some persons who stood in front, and resolved not to mention his discovery either to Cassandra or her father. In the course of a quarter of an hour he quitted them, under a promise of returning in a short time. Having proceeded to the lobby, he resolved, if possible, to meet Albert, as if by chance, and strive to draw from him the cause of his visit to Murcia. In passing along a passage which led to it his arm was suddenly laid hold of by a female, whose manners perfectly evinced the unfortunate class to which she belonged.

Orlando thought he knew the voice, but the light was too imperfect for him to view her features distinctly. They turned into an anti-room, in which there were but few persons, and he beheld with astonishment, in the figure of his companion, the poor

remains of the once innocent and blooming Laura Barnarvo. Her dress was fantastic and elegant, but voluptuous and indelicate ; her person was wasted and decayed ; and, although she was highly rouged, the effects of dissipation were easily to be observed in the faded bloom which it attempted to cover. Her eyes sparkled with a false, a destructive fire. She was evidently in a state of slight intoxication.

They had no sooner entered the apartment than she gazed upon Orlando with wild amazement, and, bursting into an hysteric laugh, pressed his hand with unusual violence.

Orlando, alarmed at the idea of being discovered by one of her appearance, which might at once cast a slur on his pure and immaculate character, began to reflect how he could for the present get rid of her.

Laura still held his hand, although her emotions prevented her utterance.

Alas ! poor fallen victim, her looks were sufficiently impressive to have worked upon his feelings ; but he was callous to every tie of humanity. Had the least impulse of hu-

man kindness throbbed in his bosom at this moment, the sight of the lost, the ruined Laura would have increased the sensation with irresistible efforts; and the reflexion that *he* was the cause of destroying so fair a work would have occasioned pangs that might in some degree have been considered as a retribution for his guilt.

“Be calm,” he exclaimed with much agitation. “Your emotions in this public place may injure me beyond reparation. Give me your address. I will see you to-morrow, and then do any thing you desire. But I must not remain here.”

Laura’s eyes spoke her reproaches.

“Answer me but one question,” she exclaimed, “and I will trouble you no more: Do my parents live? or is my present misery to be augmented with the horrid thought that I have murdered them.”

“They are no more,” exclaimed Orlando with brutal unconcern. “Your father fell by his own hand, and your mother did not survive him many hours.”

Laura heard no more. She dropped senseless at his feet.

He instantly called some persons to his assistance. He informed them that the unfortunate girl had addressed him as he was proceeding to the lobby; and that, in exhorting her to amend her life, his words had taken so great an effect as to occasion her present situation. He declared she should be directly conveyed to her lodgings at his expense. Some women who stood near selling refreshments knew her habitation. A carriage was immediately procured, and before she was thoroughly recovered Laura was placed in it. Orlando would suffer no one to attend her but himself. He was conscious this conduct appeared strange; but he was alarmed at the discoveries which Laura might make in her present state to any other companion. Before they arrived at her lodgings, although too languid to answer his injunctions on keeping their former amour a secret, she was perfectly capable of understanding them; while, as an incitement to her acquiescence on this point, he faithfully promised to see her again the next night, and render her situation as comfortable as she could wish.

Laura raised her eyes, and fixed them upon him in a manner which seemed to say, Such assurances were vain—her happiness was destroyed beyond reparation; her prospects were dark and gloomy—they presented nothing but misery and a grave.

Laura, in a fit of distraction, had quitted her parents after the fatal discovery to them of her ruin, and, almost insensible of her actions, departed from Madrid under the wild idea of claiming the protection of a distant relation for herself and parents. Before the end of her second day's journey the whole of the money which she had in her pockets was expended; she was surrounded by those who were ready to take every advantage of her situation; she became the dupe of artifices the most cruel, and at length sunk into a professed state of prostitution. She dared not return to her parents, of whose dissolution she remained ignorant; their name occasioned her the most agonising sensations, while her inquiries concerning them had in part been withheld under a dread of the information they might produce.

Orlando hurried back to the theatre; he purposely paraded the lobby several times on his return; related the same story as to Laura's sudden indisposition that he had before propagated; received high praises for his great philanthropy, and many compliments on his benevolence and goodness of heart: he again joined Don Everard and Cassandra, who had not moved from their box, and from the former received similar commendations on his conduct.

The following night he was punctual to his appointment, and traced out the lodging of Laura Barnarvo; which was in a large house in a private street, and divided into separate apartments for the frail sisterhood of the city.

Orlando disguised himself as much as possible; and having inquired of a dirty girl, who opened the door, for Laura, under the name he found she had assumed, he was informed that she was then engaged, but that he might see her in a short time if he chose to walk up stairs. To this he assented, and was conducted into a small room, meanly fitted up with little furniture of a tawdry

and inferior quality. He had not waited many minutes before he heard the voice of Laura from the next apartment, in conversation with some one, whom he immediately supposed to be a male visitor. At times she was noisy and boisterous, sung and laughed hysterically, while her discourse was gross and indelicate.

Orlando could scarcely believe it was her whom he had once known the mild, modest, and unaffected child of nature.

In a short time the visitor departed: the door which led from her apartment to the room where he sat was thrown open by the girl who conducted him up stairs. She desired he would be pleased to walk in, and Orlando immediately followed.

This chamber was similar to the one he had left—dirty, tawdry, and in parts out of repair. Every thing seemed to inspire the idea of brutal sensuality, without cleanliness, or respect to the common forms of decency and regularity.

Laura was seated upon a sofa, in a loose half-dirty night dress: her hair was dishevelled, and the rouge in parts taken from her

face, while her eyes glared with a wildness on Orlando, which for a moment daunted and oppressed him. Several bottles stood before her on a small table: he soon perceived she was intoxicated: she was drinking a large glass of spirits when he entered, while she motioned the servant to withdraw.

Orlando took her hand; it was burning with fever. "Signior Don Orlando," she exclaimed with an apparent forced gaiety, "so you are punctual to your appointment. I think I saw you at the theatre last night? yes, I did; and you told me news, dreadful news! that my parents were dead, that I murdered them!—and—but what is this to me, signior? I am happy, you see I am very happy."

As she grasped his hands at these words with uncommon force, she dropped upon them a scalding tear—sad emblem of the assertions she was making. She kissed it away, and, as if wishing to annihilate those sensations which produced it, instantly began singing with a mock frantic merriment.

"You observe," said she, after sinking

on his arm, weakened with the violent exertions of her wild behaviour, "I do all I can to entertain you. Don Orlando I loved you once, but my parents are dead since that. I saw them last night in my sleep: they were pale, ghastly pale. Oh God! God! I know not what I say! this brain of mine is burning! but indeed signior I was happy once: when I lived at Madrid with my poor parents, I loved one who destroyed me: but I forgive him, most heartily forgive him, though he has broke *my* heart!" Her attempts to stifle her tears produced hysteric weeping.

Orlando during this visit felt something like remorse.

Laura slowly recovered; he requested she would be calm; declared it was now in his power to support her with splendor, and said he would settle upon her an independence which would at once place her in comfort and affluence. Laura still gazed wildly upon him: she seemed not rightly to understand his offers, and at intervals looked as if she did not even recollect his person. It was not merely the effects of liquor which

appeared to have disordered her brain: Orlando plainly perceived, independent of its effects, her senses were deranged.

He repeated his offers, and took considerable pains to make her understand them. After some consideration, during which her eyes were raised towards heaven, she suddenly turned to Orlando, and exclaimed with much earnestness,

“Can you give me back my parents?”—This question occasioned him some emotion, while it confirmed the deranged state of intellect in her who asked it.

“Oh! signior,” she exclaimed, pressing his hand to her head, you have no conception of what passes here: I strive to gain some alleviation from a recollection of past scenes, but I cannot. I forget; and if by chance a shadow of them crosses my mind, it drives me to distraction.”

Whether Orlando actually felt some stings of remorse at this conversation, or whether he considered it as too tedious for endurance, is uncertain; he however suddenly left her, after promising to see her again; and, proceeding to the lower apartments, called for the person who kept the house.

He was requested to be seated in a parlour, decorated much in the fashion of the rooms above ; and after waiting some time, an extreme lusty woman introduced herself, under that appellation.

Her dress was tawdry and glaring, but particularly dirty. She appeared about sixty ; and if her face had been perfectly clean, it is probable the remains of some beauty might have been discovered : her eyes were red and swoln, while the other parts of it were sunk, withered, and wrinkled. Some blotches of rouge, which she had rubbed on in a hurry, when told that a cavalier, apparently of some consequence, wished to speak to her, were but fruitless attempts to conceal the ghastly pallidness of her complexion. Her nose and handkerchief bore plentiful proofs to the slovenly manner in which she took her snuff, and was not one of the least causes to render her figure disgusting.

Orlando rose at her entrance : she desired in a coarse voice he would keep his seat, and, placing herself opposite to him, requested to know, with much seeming courtesy, what might be his business with her ?

Orlando, with a preface of some sanctity, began to name her lodger, whom he had just quitted.

The procuress, whose liberty to joke with her visitors she considered as one of her dearest privileges, now exerted herself with peculiar brilliancy ; and casting a most elegant glance at her companion, uttered many *double entendres*, which, according to her ideas of expression, were devilish smart things, but which were not received with any gratitude by *him*, whom they were intended to entertain. Orlando with increased solemnity declared he was totally disinterested both in his inquiries and the arrangements he wished to make for her greater comfort and convenience.

The old lady burst into a loud fit of laughter, which she did not attempt to restrain. Orlando was still more displeased, and requested she would seriously attend to him. He desired to know whether Laura could not be better accommodated, requested she would procure medical assistance, and offered to guaranty the expenses such proceedings might occasion.

“ She might have done better herself if she had taken my advice,” said the procuress; “ but she is always in the dismal, and that don’t suit our company: she was fit for nothing till she placed herself under my care: it was I who first persuaded her to seek comfort from a cheering glass of spirits, and wonderful was the alteration which it occasioned. By these means she became passable, though never much admired: hardly make my money of her, and for these last few weeks, on my conscience, I believe the girl is mad; she is continually talking of her father, of her mother, of her lover, and such stuff as that.”

“ Can you have a heart,” continued Orlando, who wished to impress upon the old woman an idea of his benevolence, “ to talk thus of a poor young creature, whose misfortunes appear to have overcome her, and who is sinking to the grave under the most accumulated horrors and distress?”

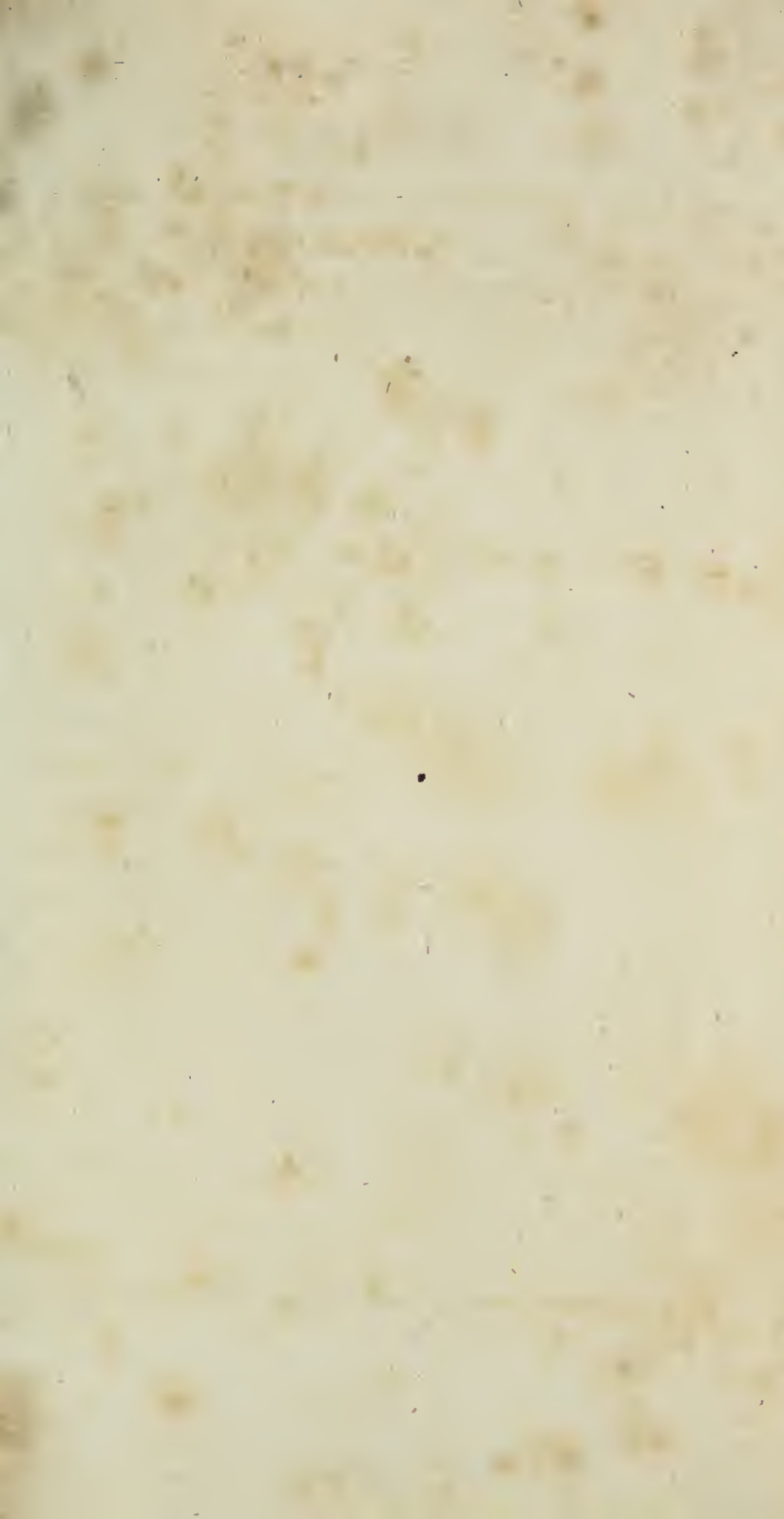
“ A fiddle-stick of your mock-modesty!” answered the procuress, who in her turn now found herself offended, while she placed her arms a-kimbo in a posture of defiance:

“ Who the devil cares for you, Mr. Sanctification? Who was it brought her to her present horrible state, as you are pleased to term it, but some such whimpering, preaching prig as yourself, whom she supposed could not do a bad act, because he always talked of good ones? I dare swear now he will hold forth on the crime of seduction, and look as demure as you do. Why you poor, paltry——”

Orlando now found it would be necessary to quell, as soon as possible, her torrent of abuse by some conciliating apology; this he immediately began, and seasoned it by a never-failing specific of two pistoles, which he dropped into her hand as an earnest of what he intended to do for her lodger, who he begged might be taken care of, and said he should call again the following night. He then precipitately withdrew, while the procuress, with a low curtsy and simpering smile, hoped she had said nothing that he had taken amiss, wished him many good nights, and, as she closed the door, balanced them with as many curses, which she continued to repeat with peculiar quick-

ness, till a draught from the favourite bottle stopped her articulation, and at once procured her that happy state of forgetfulness which proved a certain antidote to all animosity.

END OF VOL. III.





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